THE
PILGRIMAGE OF ETERNITY

The

Pilgrimage of Eternity

BEING AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF

DR. SIR MUHAMMAD IQBAL'S

JAVID NAMA

BY

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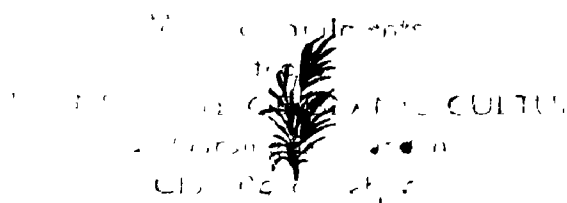
WITH A FOREWORD BY

JUSTICE S A RAHMAN

INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC CULTURE

CLUB ROAD, LAHORE—2 (WEST PAKISTAN)

To

THE MEMORY OF

THE LATE PROFESSOR SHAIKH ABDUL RASHID

OF P. W. COLLEGE, JAMMU

TEACHER, FRIEND AND GURU

WHO CROWNED A LIFE OF DEVOTION

WITH MARTYRDOM IN THE CAUSE OF PAKISTAN

THIS BOOK

IS

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

FOREWORD

TO TRANSLATE from one language to another is a hazardous and somewhat delicate process. A too literal translation may miss the spirit of the original and a too free rendering may be charged with the offence of attributing to the author something which he probably never contemplated. The difficulties of the process are considerably enhanced when the original is a poetical work by a genius and an attempt is made to adapt it to the verse forms of an alien tongue. The delicate nuances, the subtleties of expression and the cadences peculiar to the genius of a language generally defy translation.

Professor Mahmud Ahmad has undertaken the ambitious project of rendering Iqbal's Persian "Javid Nama" into English verse. For the major portion of his work, he has perhaps wisely chosen blank verse as his medium though in places he has adhered to the rhymed form of the original text. To do full justice to the charm and beauty of Iqbal's poetry perhaps required the genius of a FitzGerald but with the limitations he had to contend against, inherent in the nature of the work, Professor Mahmud Ahmad appears to me to have acquitted himself admirably well in his difficult task. So far as I could judge from a cursory comparison of portions of his translation with the original text, the departures from the latter, in point of expression, have been reduced to the minimum, consistently with the requirements of an efficient rendering. Moreover the translator seems to have thoroughly immersed himself in the living stream of Iqbal's thought (the great poet apparently adopted the pseudonym "Zinda Rud," "the living stream," for himself, in the original composition) to produce a graceful translation which must be regarded as an achievement

of a high order. The "Javid Nama" is one of Iqbal's major works, fit to rank with the classics of world literature. This translation is a commendable attempt to introduce it to the Western reader, through the medium of English which has acquired a status of its own, in the hierarchy of world languages.

S. A. RAHMAN

Lahore
27 *September* 1961

INTRODUCTION

WHILE the race for the physical conquest of the moon is on it may be of some interest to know that a great poet of this century, Doctor Sir Muhammad Iqbal, made a conquest of space in his vision He left a record of it in eloquent Persian verse, in which he scales the heights, traverses the planets and meets great spirits of all times, who resolve for the poet the problems that confront him. He enjoys the company of men who sought, and were granted, leave to live out of paradise, engaged in constant soaring of the soul. He witnesses men so despicable that hell prayed to God for being absolved from burning them, and succeeded in sparing its flames from their contamination. He is led by his guide, Jalal-ud-Din Rumi, to read the engravings on a moonstone wall in the Firmament of Moon, giving the substance of the message of great prophets for this age. He enriches his faculties by meeting men so wise as Wishwamitter, the teacher of Ram, great leaders like Sa'id Halim Pasha and Jamal al-Din Afghani who explain cardinal principles of Islam as a social philosophy, mystics like Qurat-ul-'Ain Tahira and Hallaj and the seer in Mars who sheds light on the meaning of fate. He is led by his guide to paradise where he meets poets like Bartari Hari and Tahir Ghani, oriental kings like Abdali and Tipu Sultan, and an eminent spiritual leader. Shah-i-Hamadan, whose exposition of the problem of liberation of Kashmir has a surprisingly relevant ring even to-day. All this rich spiritual experience is not enough to meet the urge of his soul because, as he explains:

> The soul remains unquenched save with His view.

Yearning for the Supreme Sight, he casts his skiff of soul in the sea of light and finds himself drowned in Beauty's sight. He confronts God with his problems, and learns

the meaning of immortality from Him. His prayer for a revelation of the destiny of this world is granted. The effulgence that smites his soul makes him fall like Moses drenched in ecstasy. Though all veils are removed from him, his speech is snatched away. The *Pilgrimage of Eternity* ends with a song issuing out of the bosom of the universe which opens with:

> Be not enchanted by the West
> Nor on the East thou needest dote,
> For both this ancient and this new
> Together are not worth an oat. (Lines 3895-3898)

There may be an element of poetic hyperbole in the above verse, but the fact remains that Iqbal is a great dissenter, almost a repudiator of much, even most, of what is conventionally hallowed. He rejects the postulate that reason or intellect, with its belief in sense-perceptions as the *exclusive* guide, can bring fulfilment to man. He rebels against the prevalent versions of mysticism like renunciation and self-abnegation. He differs with the conventional emphasis of religion on tradition and its incapacity to infuse in it a principle of movement which may give adequate guidance in changing perspective of life. He rejects nationalism whether based on geography or race or colour as something pagan. He denounces the West for its preoccupation with the world of matter and disregard of the spiritual values of life, as he does the East for its failure to transmute the material surroundings with its spiritual heritage. He repudiates socialism as well as imperialism and has little love for democracy.

This attitude becomes understandable when we look at the milieu of the poet. Born and brought up in a Kashmiri family, settled in Sialkot, with lively Islamic and mystic persuasions, and drinking deep at the fountains of Eastern and Western philosophy, he looked at his environment and found it in a sorry plight. India, his homeland, had been a British colony for two centuries, and liberation movement suffered, at every step, from the absence of a discernible principle of nationhood, in view of the emotional attachment of the majority community of Hindus to caste system, which promised no room for Muslims in a free India except as hewers of wood and

drawers of water. The condition of Muslim countries was no better. From Malaya and Indonesia to Morocco, the entire Muslim world was under the heels of imperialism, the only exceptions being the small Turkey, the desert of Arabia and primitive Afghanistan. Whether in India or outside, the vast masses of Muslims were illiterate and ignorant, torn by sectarian quarrels and suffering serfdom of feudal lords. Looking at their plight one could not believe that they were the cultural inheritors of early Muslims who had gathered all ancient knowledge, worked feverishly at its development and dissemination, and opened universities as far from their centre as Cordova in Spain, from which the West lit its earliest lamp of science and knowledge. Their conventional leaders, those of religion, whose duty it was to rescue them from this plight, had themselves lost their hold on the spirit of their faith and were concerned only with the crust of orthodoxy which had gathered during the centuries of decadence. Mystic orders which, at their best, were a revolt against religious formalism had degenerated to schools of surrender and renunciation. A doctrine of destiny had spread round which made all human efforts appear futile.

Iqbal was even more concerned with a new threat which loomed large on the horizon. Attempts for rescue were taking the shape of imitation of the West. The Muslim heritage of knowledge not having kept pace with the march of time, and local languages being generally devoid of the wealth of knowledge which filled the lap of their Western counterparts, there was no way to overcome ignorance except by adopting one of the Western languages as a medium of instruction. This was the principle on which Aligarh University was founded in India and similar universities were being established in other parts of the Muslim world. This knowledge with all its value tended to cut adrift its end products from their spiritual moorings Apart from the cheap and facile imitation of the more glittering and less enduring aspects of Western culture, this tended, at worst, to renouncing of spiritual values and, at best, to an acceptance of the duality of the spiritual and the material values of life. This last was illustrated in Kemal's Turkey which, no matter however sound the historical reasons for it, secularised the State,

reducing religion to a private affair of the individual

It would be somewhat difficult for a Western reader to understand Iqbal's objection to treating of religion as a private affair; and without a sympathetic grasp of it substantial portion of Iqbal becomes unintelligible. For certain historical reasons, the West, by and large, regards the affairs of this world the province of intellect and reason and the affairs of the next the concern of religion. The main channels of enlightenment which reached the West were the Biblio-Palestinian current and the Grecio-Roman current and the two have kept flowing side by side providing sap and sustenance to domains material and spiritual. As is inevitable, there has been some interaction between the two, but in the main these have been kept conspicuously apart. Islam, on the other hand, is at once a religion, a social movement and a way of life. It, therefore, cannot countenance any duality of the spiritual and the temporal. Matter and the soul are not two different entities, but different aspects of the same reality. Matter is the external manifestation of the soul, and the latter is the inner reality and the essence of the being of matter.

Iqbal feared that if, under the cultural impact of the West, Muslims assumed its orientation of duality of the spiritual and the temporal, it would not only sunder the contact of their life with the fountainhead of their spiritual values, but would also stultify Islam as a social movement and a way of life. In Iqbal's view the ideal and the real reach their full flowering when they meet and sustain each other. It is "the mysterious touch of the ideal," as Iqbal puts it,[1] "that animates and sustains the real, and through it alone can we discover and affirm the ideal. The life of the ideal consists not in a total breach with the real, which would tend to shatter the organic wholeness of life, but in the endeavour of the ideal to appropriate the real with a view eventually to absorb it and to convert it into itself and to illuminate its whole being."

This shattering of the organic wholeness of life is Iqbal's main grouse against the West which, having made religion a private affair, is left with no source of guidance

1 All quotations in this Introduction are from *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* by Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, unless placed elsewhere by the text

except reason or intellect. Reason, while it has extended man's mastery over Nature, has snapped his contact with the urges of his soul. Iqbal pays due tribute to reason: "The intellectual effort to overcome the obstruction offered by it (the universe), besides enriching and amplifying our life, sharpens our insight and thus prepares us for a more masterful insertion into the subtler aspects of human experience." But reason cannot go beyond this preparation and the realms of the mind and the soul remain beyond its ken Reason can only give us static snapshots of reality but cannot see its flow and continuity. It is rooted in selfishness and leads to exploitation of man by man. It produces ruthless economic systems breeding conflicts among groups and classes. It develops a craze for armaments and poses a perpetual threat of war. Human life presents the spectacle of a race without a goal, full of hurry, strain and frustration "The modern man," writes Iqbal, "with his philosophies of criticism and scientific specialism finds himself in a strange predicament. His naturalism has given him an unprecedented control over the forces of Nature but has robbed him of faith in his own future . . . wholly overshadowed by the result of his intellectual activity, (he) has ceased to live soulfully, i.e. from within. In the domain of thought, he is living in open conflict with himself, and in the domain of economic and political life he is living in open conflict with others "

Iqbal's remedy for these conflicts is to accept the basic unity of life which is spiritual in its origin and nature. Its spiritual origin presents a purpose before it, an ideal, which it strives to project and attain in its material environment Iqbal makes the idea much clearer: "The Ultimate Reality, according to the Qur-an, is spiritual and its life consists in its temporal activity. The Spirit finds its opportunity in the natural, the material and the secular. All that is secular is, therefore, sacred in the roots of its being . . . There is no such thing as a profane world. All this immensity of matter constitutes a scope for the self-realization of the Spirit. As the Prophet so beautifully puts it: 'The whole of this earth is a mosque.' "

This is neither an attitude of ascetic renunciation prescribed by decadent mystic orders, nor one of exclusive

pursuit of material ends, forgetful of the spiritual values of life, but one of creative dedication:

> I do not say forsake the world of form
> And fragrance; no, it is thy wealth, thy fief.
> Choose thou the pearls out of its grains of sand,
> Smite all its mountains with thy axe, and draw
> A light from thy own self and let it strike
> Against its fire. But do abjure the creed
> Of idol-fashioners; carve out a world
> According to thy heart's desire. Dote not
> On tint and smell, on matter's trappings all.
> The heart is God's own temple, dedicate
> It but to Him. (Lines 1346–1356).

This concept of striving for the attainment of spiritual ideals in material surroundings, of kindling an urge of devotion and dedication to God, he calls by the name of love. "This word," writes Iqbal, "is used in a very wide sense and means the desire to assimilate, to absorb. Its highest form is the creation of values and ideals and the endeavour to realize them" (Iqbal's note in the Introduction to the translation of *Secrets of the Self*). In the *Pilgrimage* he often contrasts it with reason or knowledge:

> Thou reason gav'st to me,
> Grant madness now—an inward zeal that has
> Its source in love (Lines 66–68).

Or again:

> On myriad hopes
> And fears is knowledge based, while love nor fears
> Nor hopes. While knowledge at the universe
> And at its grandeur looks and trembles, love
> Is with its beauty drenched. While at the past
> And at the present knowledge gazes, love
> Bids, "See what's yet to come." In bond with fate
> Is knowledge chained and save to be resigned
> What can avail it? Love no patience knows,
> Undaunted and uncurbed, it contemplates
> Existence in full scope, complains it not
> Even though its music drip with tears. (Lines 2354–2365).

He often sings of the unending panorama which the world of love unfolds, conferring immortality on man:

> Love dwells
> Within the soul as sight doth in the eye,
> Within and yet without, 'tis both the fire
> That flames and ashes cold. 'Tis greater than
> One's knowledge and one's faith. The final plea

Is love, and both the worlds are love's empire.
Love doth transcend both time and space, and yet
The far, the nigh, the future and the past
Proceed from love. When love the ego seeks
From God, it sways the world, establishes
The place of heart and breaks the ancient spell
Of this old idol-house. The lover gives
His self to God, surrenders he the sense
That to evasion takes Art thou one such?
Transcend the bounds of space, be free from death.
(Lines 315–329).

The entire poetry of Iqbal, like his *Pilgrimage of Eternity* is, in one sense, an expression of the throb of the human heart. It is the infinity pulsating in finite man which provides the keynote of his verse. He looks at the immensity of the human heart and the possibilities that lie hidden in the projection of its aspirations, and then compares with them the actualities of human life and thought and finds them wanting. He therefore rejects all deterministic philosophies whether Eastern, like that of fate, or Western, like those concerned with mechanical interpretation of biological and physical phenomena, as these overlook the fundamental reality of the presence of flaming desires in human hearts. His consciousness of the reality of love taught him to reject the prevalent concepts of nationalism whether based on geography or race or colour. This confirmed for him his faith in man as the vicegerent of God and led him to develop his doctrine of the ego or selfhood. This demonstrated for him the inanity of pure reason and made him sing of new vistas which love opens out to life. It made him relentlessly oppose both convention-ridden religion as well as appetite-ridden materialism, may it express itself in socialism or imperialism. This convinced him of the unity of life and brotherhood of man. This projected for him the possibility of immortality for man, and opened out an inner window to the sight of the Divine Being, which confers in spatial life His attributes on man.

Hitherto the contrast between reason and love has been somewhat over-emphasised, doubtless following Iqbal's *general* method of treatment, particularly in verse. However, his unitive thought treats of them as complementary to one another, and this is confirmed by

several specific verses as well. "The heart," says Iqbal, "is a kind of inner intuition or insight which, in the beautiful words of Rumi, feeds on the rays of the sun and brings us into contact with aspects of Reality other than those open to sense-perception . . . . It is a mode of dealing with Reality in which sensation does not play a part (but) the experience thus revealed to us is as real and concrete as any other experience. Thus it will be seen that the two are not essentially opposed to each other, for the one is the present enjoyment of the whole Reality; the other aims at traversing the whole by slowly specifying and closing up the various regions of the whole for exclusive observation. In fact, Intuition, as Bergson rightly says, is only a higher kind of Intellect, through which we enter into and grasp the nature and meaning of Reality as an indivisible whole, even as we appreciate the meaning of a picture or a symphony." In the *Pilgrimage* he makes Sa'id Halim Pasha declare:

> For westerners doth reason furnish all
> Accoutrement of life and for the East
> Love is the key of mystery. Love-led
> Can reason claim the Lord and reason lit
> Love strikes firm roots When integrated
> These two draw the pattern of a different world
> Let love and reason intermixed be
> To chart a world all new (Lines 1133-1140).

We can now proceed to Iqbal's doctrine of the ego which, like that of love, is the pivot around which his verse revolves. Basically the two are the different points of emphasis of the same phenomenon. Neither can exist without self-realisation. While the ego is concerned with the external manifestations and expressions of love, the latter is the fountainhead which generates the requisite energy and sheds the necessary light.

There are many verses in the Qur'an which appear to have influenced the poet in the formulation of this concept. According to the Qur'an, man is the vicegerent of God. He is given insight into the nature of reality which even the angels do not possess. Indeed that is the reason why the Lord asked the angels to lie prostrate before him, a position acceptable to all except Satan, who was externed from the Divine Presence and permitted to lead forces of evil till the Day of Judgment. He

tempted Adam in paradise resulting in his eviction from it. But there is a slight difference between the Biblical and the Quranic versions of the story of the fall of man. According to the Qur'an, Adam sought forgiveness for his sin *which was granted to him*, so that nothing was left of the original sin which should make Adam's progeny regard this habitat as a torture hall. Of course he did not return to paradise which he had to win back by living on this earth. He was to get guidance and was given free will to accept or reject it and face consequences The Quranic story of the fall of man has the obvious possibility of being re-stated as the story of the rise of man, and Iqbal takes full advantage of this possibility. "Its purpose," he points out, "is to indicate man's rise from a primitive state of instinctive appetite to the conscious possession of a free self, capable of doubt and disobedience." Adam's paradise is "a primitive state in which man is practically unrelated to his environment and consequently does not feel the sting of human wants, the birth of which alone marks the beginning of human culture." Man's life on this earth opens up the possibility of wrong-doing, but it also provides the opportunity to participate in the creative life of his Maker. The main sublimation which occurs to man in his eviction from paradise is the new gift of free will which he acquires. This gift is described by the Qur'an as a "trust which was offered to the heaven and the earth," who refused the great burden, and man alone had the daring to accept it. And finally, there are several verses which provide subjection of natural forces, in fact all "that exists in the earth and the heavens" to man's exploitation.

Islam then assigns a very distinguished role to man, and this finds expression in Iqbal's concept of the ego or selfhood. Iqbal wants man to be conscious of his role and give creative expression to this awareness. Since moral responsibility for giving a true account of the use of constructive and creative faculties rests with each individual, it is natural for Iqbal to reject pantheism and to treat of all life as individualistic, God as the most unique individual, and universe as something in constant flux, providing opportunity for self-expression to all self-affirming ego-centres of life. "All life," writes Iqbal in his

note to Professor Nicholson, "is individual; there is no such thing as universal life. God Himself is an individual: He is the most unique individual. The universe, as Dr. McTaggart says, is an association of individuals; but we must add that the orderliness and adjustment which we find in this association is not eternally achieved and complete in itself. It is the result of instinctive or conscious effort We are gradually travelling from chaos to cosmos and are helpers in this achievement." The end of the ego is to acquire the attributes of God to fulfil the divine role envisaged for it by God. The success of every ego will be measured by the reach and sweep which it manifests. Iqbal explains in the note referred to above: "Physically as well as spiritually man is a self-contained centre, but he is not yet a complete individual. The greater his distance from God, the less his individuality. He who comes nearest to God is the completest person. Not that he is finally absorbed in God. On the contrary, he absorbs God into himself."

However this ego is not a datum but a creative possibility, an achievement. Writes Iqbal: "It is the lot of man to share in the deeper aspirations of the universe around him and shape his own destiny as well as that of the universe, now by adjusting himself to its forces, now by putting the whole of his energy to mould its forces to his own end and purpose. And in this process of progressive change, God becomes a co-worker with him, provided man takes the initiative: 'Verily, God will not change the condition of men, till they change what is in themselves' (the Qur-an). If he does not take the initiative, if he does not evolve the inner richness of his being, if he ceases to feel the inward push of advancing life, then the spirit within him turns into stone and he is reduced to the level of dead matter."

All problems are resolved for the poet with reference to this concept of selfhood. The creation of the universe, a continuing process, is the self-expression of the Highest Ego. Evolution is the record of self-affirmation of life-centres Death is the incapacity or indifference to reach out to one's full stature. Immortality is a possibility before the ego which can be achieved by courageous and self-affirming ego-activity. Heaven and hell are not

external to one's soul, but projections of inner realisation of one's highest aspirations or its failure. This also provides the standard of value and settles the problem of good and evil. "That which fortifies personality is good, that which weakens it is bad. Art, religion and ethics must be judged from the standpoint of personality" (Iqbal's note to Professor Nicholson).

In one sense the entire *Pilgrimage of Eternity* is an exposition of the doctrine of the self. However, different aspects of the theme find recurrent and eloquent expression:

> The flight to heaven means a longing for
> A witness who may testify thyself.
> Unless it be confirmed by Him, our life
> Is nothing but a play of tint and smell
> No one can stand against His beauty bright
> Except the one who has perfection reached.
> O grain of sand, thy lustre do not lose,
> Thy ego's knot but tighten up Thy gleam
> Increase, then test thyself against the sun,
> If thou canst thus reshape thyself and pass
> The test, thou art alive and praised or else
> The fire of life is smoke and naught beside. (Lines 245–256).

He sings of man's rank:

> I sing
> But of the shoreless sea which is his heart,
> In which the aeons and the eras sunken lie.
> What man contains in himself is the world,
> And what the world cannot enclose is man
> His vision makes the sun and moon unveiled;
> And even Gabriel no access gains
> Unto his solitude His lofty rank
> Is higher far than heaven. therefore know
> On man's respect is civilisation based. (Lines 1215–1224).

An objection has been raised against Iqbal's concept of selfhood that it tends to edify acquisition of brute power in man This objection is based on a grossly mundane appraisal of Iqbal's thesis which, if properly understood, is a reaction against material interpretation of life. He wants man to look inwards, acquire consciousness of the spiritual purpose of his life, and externalise that purpose in material surroundings. The source which gives him this doctrine, the concept of vicegerency of man, is also the one which prohibits its

misinterpretation. How can a vicegerent be true to his role if his selfhood runs counter to the behests of Divine purpose?

Another objection is that Iqbal's verse lacks the throb of universal brotherhood. He rejects distinctions of geography, race and colour and inserts the distinction of religion. To begin with it must be confessed that Iqbal acquires most of his concepts from the spiritual heritage of Islam. Being a Muslim, and primarily concerned with infusing life and resurrecting the vast masses of Muslims who had reduced themselves to lifeless clay, it was in some measure inevitable. Yet the presentation he gives of Islam, though soundly rooted in original sources, is substantially different from what was conventionally current. "Iqbal's philosophy," writes Professor Nicholson in the Introduction to his translation of the *Secrets of the Self*, "is religious, but he does not treat philosophy as the handmaid of religion." He is enamoured of certain aspects of the teaching of Islam like its acceptance and consecration of the world of matter, the lofty purpose it assigns to human life, its emphasis on brotherhood of man, and, above all, its integration of the spiritual and the material, the ideal and the real. Islam, however, is an ideal which a society has to strive for, and cannot be equated with what people, who profess to be Muslims, do or believe in. The poet was far from satisfied with the current shape of Muslim society, and since he regarded the spiritual value of Islamic ideology as deathless, he even countenanced the possibility of a people other than Muslims being the first in the modern age to acquire and practically translate it in real life:

> Deserted is our tavern and the cups
> Are wineless ever since the Saki has
> Forsaken us. What melodies unheard
> Sleep in the Qur'an's harp; and if our bow
> Should fail to strike them forth then destiny
> Can send a thousand other minstrels. For
> The word of God doth not depend on time
> Or place or nations, no, it far transcends
> The words of even those who utter it.
> It is above, apart; it needs no land,
> No Rum or Syria, for its home. If God
> Removes it from us, He may then assign
> It to a people new. What do I see

In Mussalmans except blind following
And sterile doubt? I shudder at the thought,
I fear the day when they will be deprived
And disinherited of fire divine
Which will enkindle then quite other hearts. (Lines 1580–1597).

Iqbal appears to be concerned with giving a universally acceptable tone to his particular spiritual heritage. And this is exactly what some of the greatest of poets before him, like Dante, Milton and Goethe, did at their best. And just as they have been a perennial source of man's enlightenment, so, it is the translator's hope, Iqbal may well prove to be.

And now I have to offer a few words of apology for presenting this translation. Iqbal had been keen on an adequate English translation of this book and certainly the work deserved a better hand than mine. However, since no one else appeared to be concerned with it, the eloquence of the original Persian verse, as I read it some twenty years ago, proved too compelling for resistance. The first draft, as it emerged, left much to be desired, and whenever opportunity and inclination coincided, which was only now and then, I turned to revising the draft. Many kind friends read it and generously offered their criticism and help in improving it. They included the late Professor Shaikh Abdur Rashid of P. W. College, Jammu, Professor Ghulam Ahmad Zargar of S. P. College, Srinagar, Professor Hosain Ali Khan of Osmania University who, through the courtesy of the Editorial Board of *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad, Deccan, helped to improve the first twenty-one pages; the late Professor F. J. Fielden of Cambridge and Aligarh Universities, the late Dr. M. D. Taseer and the late Dr. Khalifa Abdul Hakim offered numerous valuable suggestions. However, the most generous and painstaking help was given to me by Mr. Yusuf Bach, without which the translation would have been far less presentable than what, I hope, it is. It may still not have been published but for the complimentary views of Professor Khwaja Manzoor Husain, probably the most competent literary critic in the sub-continent. I then had doubts whether it made any sense for the Western reader who was unfamiliar with the original Persian book and was reassured by Mr. Leon B. Poullada,

sometime United States Consul at Lahore, and so was the Institute of Islamic Culture, my publishers, by Mr. J. Spencer, recently on the staff of the Language Unit of the University of the Panjab, whom they consulted in the matter and whose comments occasioned the last improvement of the draft.

In the end I have to record my deep sense of gratitude to everyone of the above gentlemen, and in particular to Mr. Yusaf Bach, who gave such unstinted help and guidance to me. Indeed, if there be anything commendable in the translation it should be ascribed to them. The faults, however, remain entirely my own, because they, quite often, allowed my opinion to prevail, even when they knew better.

MAHMUD AHMAD

Abbottabad

August 12, 1961

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CORRIGENDA

Page	*Line*	*Correction*
40	833	Put a full-stop at the end.
46	981	Footnote is on the next page.
76	1620	*Him* in place of *him*.
85	1817	*Both* in place of *Doth*.
93	1965	Inverted commas close at the end of the line.
105	title	*Tahira* in place of *Tahir*.
114	2401	*far past* in place of *for past*.
136	2838	Put a full-stop at the end
139	2879	Ditto
157	3263	*We* in place of *we*.
162	3376	Insert a comma after why.

PREFACE

My vision once surveyed the sky and rode
The moon and in the Pleiades' lap did rest,
Regard not this earth as our only nest,
Each star's a world or was once life's abode.

INVOCATION

MAN in this seven-coloured universe,
Ev'r given to lamentation like the flute,
With longings for a kindred soul, that burn
His being and instruct him to strike forth
Sweet melodies, looks at this universe, 5
Of lifeless matter formed, unattributed with
A throbbing heart. The seas, the wilds, the hills
And plains are mute, the sun, the moon, the sky
Itself in silence cast. Although the stars
Have thronged the sky, yet each is loneli'r than 10
The rest, each, unavailing like ourselves,
A helpless wanderer of azure space.
They make a caravan, though unequipped,
Yet coursing in the boundless skies through long
Unending nights. Am I a hunter wild 15
Who holds the universe as prey or just
A captive out of mind, none heeding to
His plaint: where Adam's son can meet a friend?

The days which make man's dwellings bright I've lived
All o'er the world A spinning planet makes 20

Them live, they terminate too soon. O for
A day, a different day, whose morn should have
Nor noon nor eve—a day whose light shall fill
The soul and make sounds visible like hues,
25 Revealing all that's dark, unknown; a day
That ne'er shall cease to be. O Lord! grant such
A day to me, and take away the days
Which bring my heart and soul no kindling flame.

Who was ordained to conquer all? For whom
30 The sky looks rapt in gaze? Who quaffed the cup
From Saqi's hands and learnt the names?[1] Who was
Selected once to Thy creation crown;
To whom didst Thou impart Thy mysteries?
Thy shaft has pierced my heart: to whom said'st Thou,
35 "Call out to Me"?[2] Thy face is my faith's core,
My holy book. Pray keep not back from me
Thy radiance. Can it be that the sun
Will pale because it has expended light?

The present age is shackled by the chains
40 Of intellect; where is a restless soul

1 Cf. The Qur'an, ii 31. "And He taught Adam the nature (lit. the names) of all things"

2. Cf The Qur'an, xl. 60

Like mine ? Life doth revolve round self for long
To fashion one such soul. Take not amiss
If I say Thy earth's barren for the seed
Of man's desire. 'Tis fortunate if Thou
Canst find one throbbing heart in sterile soil. 45
Thou art my Moon, come to my dark abode,
And see the gloom of my life for a while.
Why should a flame disdain to burn a straw?
Why should the lightning fear to send its bolt?

In anguish I have lived my life, now pray 50
Reveal the other side of this blue arc.
Unbar the shuttered gates for me and let
Men know what angels dream. My Lord! within
My bosom light a fire to burn the dross
And spare the incense for a while, and then 55
The fire should spread and flame the incense too,
And let its smoke coil all around the world.
Thy disregard now temper with a glance,
So that my goblet turns incandescent.
Thou art away from sight and Thee alone 60
I seek—nay, Thou art all around, I lack
The proper vision. Pray remove the veil,
This mystic veil, or take away this life,

This sightless life. Bare is the tree of my
65 Philosophy, send leafy spring or cut
Away this tree. Thou reason gav'st to me,
Grant madness now—an inward zeal that has
Its source in love. Our learning dwells in doubt
While love abides in wakeful hearts. Unless
70 Our knowledge springs from love, it is a show
Of flights of mind, a pagan pageant.
Philosophy unblessed of the Holy Ghost
Is just a charm The scholar vainly gropes
And dies of hammering thoughts. Without
75 The light of love all life's forlorn, and faith
A chain and reason helplessness. This world
Of mountains, seas and wilds yields barren facts
To me whereas I seek insight. O let
This wandering heart now reach its goal, restore
80 This broken slice unto the moon. Although
Save words my clay has nothing grown, the wails
Of separation do not end. I find
Myself alone beneath the sky, now from
Beyond the sky repeat "I'm nigh,"[1] and from
85 The chains of these dimensions set me free,
With neither North nor South, so that the lure

1. The Qur'an, ii. 186

Of Past and Future I may spurn and so
Bypass the sun, the moon, the galaxy.

Thou art eternal light and we are sparks
With only borrowed moments for our lives. 90
O Thou who never faced the strife 'twixt life
And death, how can man envy Thee?—the one
Who grips all space and restless feels, whom nor
Retirément nor concourse can satisfy.
Grant me celestial life, O Lord! extend 95
My moment to eternity. Pray teach
Restraint in speech. Bid me traverse with speed
The paths that lie ahead. Of a different world
Is what I sing, from heaven far has come
This book. I am a sea but who will dive 100
Into its depths? The scatter or the flow
Is all they see who settled on my shore.
I have no hope from older men, I sing
Of days unborn, but help the young my words
To comprehend and wade my depths with ease. 105

PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN

THE FIRST DAY OF CREATION : THE SKY REVILES THE EARTH

FOR joys of union and retirement life
Shaped this expansive universe and out
Of its breath fashioned forth the wonder-house
Of days and nights. This scattered all around
110 The zeal and love of egos to express
Themselves: each one proclaimed, "I'm different from
Thyself." Thus learnt the moon and stars to glide,
A hundred lamps were lit in space: the sun
On the sky pitched its golden canopy
115 With ropes of silver hue, and in the east
The first dawn broke and from the world new-born
It raised the veil. Man's earth was desolate
As yet. No caravan had crossed its sands,
No streams yet struggled through the hills, no clouds
120 Would drip above the wastes, nor chirped the birds
On twigs, nor leapt the roes in leas. The earth
Uneven was like winding smoke, unlit
With life its oceans or its lands, the grass
Slept in its depths, bereft of vernal air.
125 The sky reviled the earth, "I've never seen
The plight of one like thee, stark blind within

My ken; except my lamp, wherefrom would'st thou
Derive thy light? Thy dust may raise itself
To Alvand's[1] height, it neither glows nor grows.
Now choose a harlot's trappings for thyself 130
Or die of shame." This slander grieved the earth,
Who felt forlorn and sad and raised her eyes
To God to light her sordid life and from
Beyond the sky a voice responded thus:
"If thou hadst known thy priceless trust thou would'st 135
Not grieve. For if thou look'st within thy soul
Thou'lt find tumultuous life to brighten up
Thy days and spurn the outer source of light.
What makes the morning bright?—the spotted sun!
From stainless life thy light will come. This light 140
Will move in pathless spaces faster than
The moonbeams or the sun's rays. Hast thou washed
Hope's limning from the tablet of thy soul?
It is from thy own dark dust that the glow
Of life will come. Man's knowledge will invade 145
All space, his love will claim the Infinite.
With eyes more wakeful than e'en Gabriel's,
He'll find the way unled. Though moulded out
Of clay he'll like the angels soar, until

1. A mountain in Iran which was considered sacred.

150 The sky will be a tavern old upon
The path he treads. The texture of this vault
He'll pierce just as a needle runs through silk,
And wash the cloth of life of all its stains.
His glance will make the murky earth aglow.
155 Though little given to prayer and disposed
To bloodshed, yet a spur he'll be for time.
He from the universe will learn to see
The Being in Attributes. 'He who is lost
In rapture o'er the beauty of the Lord
160 Becomes the monarch of all living things.' "

THE SONG OF ANGELS

Such glory shall the man of clay
Own far above the angels' light
That with his star of destiny
He'll make the earth like heaven bright.
165 Possessed of such a mind that feeds
On every storm that time may bring,
He'll fly and clear across one day
The whirlpool of this azure ring
Consider what man signifies
170 Evolving to what's yet to be,

A subject heaving into form,
Of him why should you ask of me?

Soon fashioned forth in rhythmic poise,
This subject old, this common man,
Will with his rapturous impact 175
The heart of even God attain.

PROLOGUE ON EARTH

THE SPIRIT OF RUMI APPEARS AND REVEALS THE SECRETS OF THE FLIGHT[1]

TUMULTUOUS love that shuns the crowded towns
From noises shelter seeks on wilds and hills
Or shores of boundless seas; thus saves its flame
From death. And so I rested on the coast 180
Awhile, far off from friends in whom I failed
To find a kindred soul. The waters blue
In sunset glowed like scarlet wine and made
The blind for vision yearn; and evening smiled
And gleamed like morn. There I with my own soul 185
Had counsel deep, and questions and desires
Full swayed my mind. In moments rooted was
My self, and I felt unaware of life
And everlastingness. A fountain flowed

1 Mi'raj · the Prophet's flight to the skies

190 But I far off, and parched, did sing this song.
I long for honey lips of thine
And love the garden of thy face;
O dance with me a measured pace,
I'll hold thy locks and quaff the wine.
195 Say once again, "Tease me not, bide";
I love this coyness, give me more;
For wisdom is bewildering lore,
On my paths, Love, be thou my guide.
What sustenance the sky may send
200 Is lost, while oceans are my claim,
Of Moses' hand grant me the flame[1]
For Pharaohs still my soul enrend.
But yester-eve a lamp in hand
The Shaykh did all the city span,
205 Sick of mere ghosts he sought a man,
But could find none in all the land.
"I Rustum[2] or a Haydar[3] seek
I'm sick of snails, am sick," he said,
"There's none," said I. He shook his head,
210 "There's none like them, but still I seek."

1. The miracle of the Shining Hand shown by Moses
2. A famous Persian warrior
3 The fourth Caliph after the Prophet, proverbial for his bravery

While thus I sang, the restless wave did sleep
On water's golden couch. The sky grew dark
But from the setting sun the evening stole
A slice and made a shining star appear
Like love at window. Rumi's spirit rose 215
Behind the hills and tore all veils. Benign
And like the sun was his clear countenance,
And age, in him, did scintillate like youth,
His figure gleamed with godly light that lent
Him bliss and grace. The secrets of this life 220
Hung on his lips and burst the bounds of word
And sound. The words he spoke were crystal clear
With learning full and inward light. I asked
Of him, "What's life and death? What's good and bad?"
"The urge of self-expression's life," he said, 225
"For self-revealing is ingrained in us.
Life seeks to manifest itself, to gain
External evidence to prove its worth,
When this assembly was arrayed by God
Existence found a witness for itself. 230
Art thou alive or dead or dying fast?
Three witnesses should testify thy state.
The first as witness is the consciousness
Of self, to see thyself by thy own light.

235 The second is another's consciousness
That thou may'st kindle thus to see thyself.
And thy third witness is God's consciousness,
A light in which thou may'st see thyself.
Before the Lord's effulgence if thou stand'st
240 Thou art alive like him. For life is but
To reach thy destined end, that is to see
The Lord unveiled. One who believes
Shall never lose himself in Attributes
For Mustafa insisted on the Sight.

245 "The flight to heaven means a longing for
A witness who may testify thyself.
Unless it be confirmed by Him, our life
Is nothing but a play of tint and smell.
No one can stand against His beauty bright,
250 Except the one who has perfection reached.
O grain of sand! thy lustre do not lose,
Thy ego's knot but tighten up. Thy gleam
Increase, then test thyself against the sun,
If thou canst thus reshape thyself and pass
255 The test, thou art alive and praised or else
The fire of life is smoke and naught beside."

I asked again, "But how to reach the Lord.

And break the way through all material bounds ?
The Lord who doth create is far above
The world of men who groan with pains untold." 260
"If thou may'st come to hold authority,"[1]
He made reply, "Then thou canst cross the skies.
So live that this mysterious world for thee
Be bared, and its dimensions be dissolved.
Thou seest the Lord through self and self through Him, 265
Nor more nor less thou seest of God than that.
Authority's the key, remember it,
Or else like ants and worms thou diest. Thou cam'st
By way of birth into this world cramped by
The sides. Outgrowing it's another birth 270
Which leaves thyself uncabined, unconfined.
But this is not mere body's birth as one
Who owns a soul will know. That birth was forced
This is for thee to choose; while that is veiled
This all revealed. A wail accompanies that, 275
But this a thrill attends. That seeks and this
Achieves, that makes thee move or stay in space,
This lets thee cross its bounds On days and nights
That taught thee to depend, this teaches thee
To master day and night. While child-birth brings 280

1 Cf The Qur'an, lv. 33

Travail to woman, all the world doth quake
When man is born. At both the births the call[1]
Resounds, at that from lips, at this from life.
When Living Soul is in this body born
285 A shaking in this ancient world is seen."

"I do not understand this birth," I said.
"This is a form of life," he said, "and life
Means company and isolation both:
That moves, this stays. In company doth man
290 Dissolve himself, alone he gathers back
His mind. In company the attributes
Do brighten up his way, but when alone
The Being is his light. To company
Doth reason drag, but love restores his self.
295 Although man's reason too assails the world
And breaks its spell, finds stones to read as books
And listens to the clouds, and doth possess
The seeing eye, yet reckless valour lacks.
It gropes its way just like the blind and moves
300 As slow as snail. So long as reason winds
Itself around mere scent and hue, the path
Of love it treads but haltingly. It works

1 The Muslim call to prayer which is breathed in the ears of new-born babies.

But gradually, for truth, I do not know
If it will e'er complete its task. But love
Defies the month, the year, all space and time. 305
When faced with mountains, reason will just hack
And cut and cleave, but love sweeps them away
Like straw, love like the moon doth swiftly sail.
Love's target is the Infinite, love moves
Beyond; it enters not the grave. Its strength 310
Is muscles strong nor water, wind nor earth.
Love eats black bread but breaks the Khaybar fort,[1]
Love cuts the moon in twain,[2] and Namrud's head,[3]
Love smites without a single stroke, and routs
The Pharaoh's hosts without a war.[4] Love dwells 315
Within the soul as sight doth in the eye,
Within and yet without: 'tis both the fire
That flames and ashes cold. 'Tis greater than
One's knowledge and one's faith. The final plea
Is love, and both the worlds are love's empire. 320
Love doth transcend both time and space, and yet
The far, the nigh, the future and the past
Proceed from love. When love the ego seeks
From God, it sways the world, establishes

1. Refers to Hadrat 'Ali's breaking open the gate of the Khaybar fort
2. Alludes to a miracle of the Holy Prophet
3. Refers to the spiritual triumph of Abraham against Namrud
4. Allusion is to the drowning of Pharaoh in the Nile

325 The place of heart and breaks the ancient spell
Of this old idol-house. The lover gives
His self to God, surrenders he the sense
That to evasion takes. Art thou one such?
Transcend the bounds of space, be free from death.
330 O thou who buried art like one deceased,
Thou canst arise without the trumpet blast.
How long should'st thou but croak like frogs in swamps
When striking melodies pant in thy throat?
Now master space and time, and cast aside
335 The cord that binds. With ears and eyes both keen
And sharp read meanings new in things thou seest.
'The one who hears the music of an ant,
Doth really hear time's secret from time's lips.'[1]
Acquire from me the eye that burns the veil
340 And liberates the sight. 'The flesh is shell,
The kernel is the sight with which one seeks
One's love. Let thy whole flesh melt into sight
And in that sight be thou entirely lost.'[2]

"Fear not the skies nor fear this space, but cast
345 Thine eye on space and time which are two forms
Of life. For time was born when life did love

1 and 2 From Rumi.

Confront. The seed that's buried in the earth
Deprived of every sight has little thought
That it can grow and blossom forth. The urge
To grow gives it its rank, its longing is 350
The essence of its being and its self.

"O thou who say'st the body doth contain
The soul, see secret of the soul, and of
The body be not proud. 'Tis not the soul's
Abode, but is an aspect of the soul. 355
What is the soul ?—it is a blissful zeal,
An anguish and a holy fire that seeks
To make assault and conquer firmaments.
The body takes to space, and comfort seeks
And finds in scent and tint. Both far and nigh 360
Proceed from consciousness, whereas the Flight
Means transformation of this consciousness,
Brought forth by urge and zeal, liberating us
From far and nigh—the body cannot stop
Or check the soaring soul from onward flight." 365

ZARWAN, THE SPIRIT OF TIME AND SPACE, CARRIES THE PILGRIM TO THE UNIVERSE ABOVE

LIKE aspen quivered every particle

In me—his words so moved my soul. From East
To West I gazed and found the sky all draped
In clouds of light from which a spirit rose
370 With faces two: this one like fire, that one
Like smoke, that one as dark as night, this one
A shining star, with open eyes on this one,
Closed on that. His wings wore all the hues:
Red, green and yellow, silvery and pink.
375 And motion did belong to him like thought
That ever linked the earth to Milky Way.
Each instant he conceived a new desire
To cross fresh climes and regions of the air.
He said, "Zarwan I am, who holds the world
380 In thrall, at once concealed and visible.
All efforts are related to my fate,
I've thus enslaved the eloquent, the mute.
For me the beauteous bud upon the branch
Doth bloom, and sings the bird in nest. I fly
385 And give its growth to grain, with union crown
The lover's separation. I rebuke
And I reward; I cause the pangs of thirst
Until I bring the wine; I symbolise
Both life and death and resurrection too;
390 I am the judgment, and both heaven and hell;

All men and angels are my captives mere,
This six-day world is but a child of mine.
I am the rose thou pluckest from the branch,
It is my breast that suckles everything.
Imprisoned in my magic is the world, 395
Which, with my breath, grows old and doth decay.
That valiant soul alone can break my charm
Whose heart proclaims, 'I have a time with God.'[1]
If thou dost wish that I may not remain
Between, let thy heart too announce the words." 400

I know not what was in his glance, but from
My sight this old world flew. Maybe a new
World met my eyes, or all the universe
Was rocked. I died inside this home of scent
And hue, was born within a noiseless sphere 405
My links were snapped from this material world,
A loss that pained my mind, till from my soil
A new world sprouted forth. The flesh became
A lighter substance, and the spirit grew
All nimbler still, the eye of mind so gained 410
In sight and keenness that it tore all veils ;
And e'en the song of stars could reach my ears.

1 The opening words of the following hadith of the Prophet. "I have a time with God of such sort that neither angel nor prophet is my peer '

THE SONG OF STARS

Life's kernel is thy sense,
World's secret is thy love,
415 O earthly mould, we joy
That thou hast come above.

Moon, Venus, Jupiter
Are rivals for thy sight
The hope of thy one glance
420 Doth keep them gay and bright.

While virgin visions make
The path of love aglow,
The longing heart cannot
Before mere abstract bow.

425 Life dwells in truth, it doth
With urge for growth extend,
The country of the Lord
It is from end to end.

If 'tis the bard's desire
430 Then let him sing new song,
Give brimming cups to all
Who drink or call it wrong.

Iran, Iraq and Ind
For sweets do ever moan,
435 Give them taste for the bitter
Who like but sweets alone.

Put in desires wild
In tiny hearts of streams,
With surges of the ocean
They may of fight now dream. 440

While sovereignty is straw,
Faqir is burning fire,
Whose blunt word can undo
The monarchies entire.

Alexander with his fire 445
Builds up a Pharaoh's charm,
But Moses' shining hand
Protects him from all harm.

That one doth kill with fire,
And burns this one with sight; 450
That one is war entire,
This source of peaceful right.

Both long for permanence,
The world they do extend,
That one with force ascends, 455
With sweet love this doth mend.

Bring forth the dervish's stroke
The China Wall to shatter;
Revive the rite of Moses,
And magic will not matter! 460

THE FIRMAMENT OF THE MOON

THE earth and sky is but the Lord's estate
Who gave to us dominion o'er the stars.
Look confidently at what meets thy eyes;
Betrayest thou a stranger's fearful tread
465 In thy own land—O thou art torn away
From self, be unafraid. All things subserve
But thy command; they do and they abstain
As thou should'st will. The world is nought except
An idol-house of the ear and the eye,
470 Where like all yesterdays each morrow dies.
Be of this temple thou an Abraham ![1]
Wild in pursuit of aim, traverse the earth,
And overpass the sky, and as thy quest
Proceeds, demand thou boldly from thy Lord
475 New firmaments and newfold time and space.
A restful trance by banks of heaven's streams,
In carefree disregard of battling good
And bad—if, in this stoppage of all search,
Salvation lies, the grave is better place
480 Than paradise itself. O traveller!
Sojourning kills the soul, but constant flight
Gives it increase and an abundant life.

1 Abraham, according to Islamic religious history, shattered the idols that were worshipped by his tribe.

How happy is to sail among the stars,
How blissful not to rest ! I mounted space
Until all things above appeared below. 485
The murky earth grew brighter than the moon
And wondrous strange, my shadow fell above
My head. I, nearer, closer, on and on,
Flew till the mountains of the moon appeared
Before my eyes. And Rumi said, "Now cleanse 490
Thyself of fear and learn celestial style
And mode. The once far moon is well aware
Of us and is the first stage on our way.
The pace of time in this world and the caves
Within its mountains are a sight to see." 495

With shattered sides and burning bosoms stood
The mountains steep—a breathless silence reigned.
The Kha-fa-teen and Yal-dram[1] spouted smoke,
And in their entrails hid a raging fire.
No grass would venture forth, no birds dared fly; 500
The clouds lacked moisture and the bitter winds
But smote the lifeless soil. A world it was
Without both sound and hue, which gave no clue
And showed no track of either life or death.

1 Names of two imaginary mountains of the moon.

505 Nor of the tree of life its womb concealed
The sap, nor events were born from its loins.
Though to the tribe of the sun it belonged,
No change was born out of its morn and eve.

Said Rumi, "Rise and speed thy pace to gain
510 Its living wealth. A different world those caves
Conceal, much happier than their outward look.
Fence in thy mind all thou behold'st or hear'st,
For if the eye owns insight it regards
And measures everything in vision's scale.
515 With Rumi tread and for a while forget
The rest," and saying thus he softly held
My arm, flew swift and reached a cavern's mouth.

An Indian Seer who Lives Alone in one of the Caves of the Moon and whom the Indians style "The Friend of the World"[1]

So like the blind on my companion's arm
I placed my hand and in the cavern deep
520 I stepped. Its sombrous gloom but stained the moon
In which the sun itself could only grope
For light. In that pervading dark all doubts

1 Wishwamitter, the teacher of Ram

And disbelief assailed me and engulfed
My reason and my sense. I walked like one
Who treads the path where robbers lurk, my heart 525
All empty of the bliss of certitude.
But soon a radiant dawn, without the sun,
Did flood its light and bared all prospects. Lo!
A vale whose rocks wore sacred threads and trees
Like giants stood—I wondered what it was, 530
A real world or my thought limned in a dream.
Intoxicating was its air like wine,
Its shadows, mirrored in its earth, became
All light. Its globe was not encircled by
The azure vault, nor its horizons dyed 535
In red and gold by dawn and dusk, and yet
Its morn and eve were smokeless, and its light
No darkness chained. The Indian seer sat
Beneath a tree; he whose collyrium grants
New sight to eyes. Ungarbed his body was, 540
His long hair gathered on his head, his neck
Was circled by a writhing serpent white.
A man who rose above material things,
For whom the world was but an idol from
The temple of his thoughts, to whom nor time 545
Nor the blue fateful sky brought any change.

He said to Rumi, "Who accompanies thee?
I see a yearning for life in his eyes."

Rumi

A man lost in perpetual search, endued
550 With planet's restlessness, though comet-like.
His failings but mature his enterprise
And so his imperfections I adore.
He holds his mirror to the sky, his thought
Would gaze on Gabriel's face unveiled. He swoops
555 Upon the sun, the moon; and swiftly round
The firmaments revolves. He with an air
Of saucy nonchalance doth laugh away
The houries as mere idols, and the heaven
As heathen's shrine. His smoke is fire itself,
560 His prayer presents prospect of the Lord.
Perennially he sings the song of love,
In union and in separation he
Doth find an equal smart. I do not know
What elements contained are in his clay,
565 I know not of his rank and destiny.

The Friend of the World

No hue has God, the world is colourful,
But what is God? the World? and what is man?

Rumi

Man is the sword with which the Lord doth strike,
The world is of this sword the whetting stone.
The east beheld the Lord but missed the world, 570
The west was in the world engrossed and ran
Away from God. To fix thy gaze upon
The Lord is prayer, to see thy naked self
Is life The Lord His blessings doth bestow
On him who takes his rightful share of life. 575
The one who of his fate is unaware,
Is clay, unlit with radiance of the soul.

The Friend of the World

The east has not unravelled secrets though
It coils itself around both life and death.
We dwellers of the sky look at the earth, 580
And with its morrow's promise fill our soul.
The yester-morn I saw an angel come
Unto the peak of Kashmarud from the sky.
Desire for sight did trickle from his eyes
While he beheld but at the earth. I said, 585
"Do not withhold thy secrets from thy friends,
What dost thou see within that silent earth?
Hast thou been melted by a Zohra's charms,

And cast thy heart in the well of Babylon?"[1]
590 He said, "It is the twilight that shall bring
A new sun in the east. The pebbles pale
Upon its tracks have turned to rubies bright,
Its Josephs have leapt out of wells. From end
To end in it a revolution I
595 Have seen, a shaking in its mountains great.
It has discarded fashioning idols now,
And shapes and chisels nought except its self.
How happy are the people who possess
A flaming soul and recreate themselves.
600 That moment is the very morn of Eid
In heaven, when a nation wakes again."

The Pir of India breathed for a while,
And then he turned a piercing glance at me.
He asked, "What makes man's reason die?" I made
605 Reply, "To cease to think." "What kills the heart?"
"To cease to pray." "What is the flesh?" "'Tis but
The dust we gather on the way." "The soul?"
"A symbol of the Lord." "And man?" "He is
A secret of the Lord." "The world?" "He thus

1 Reference is to the legend of an angel who fell in love with a woman and was, by way of punishment, lodged in a well of Babylon.

Reveals Himself." "Man's knowledge and his art?" 610
" Mere shell." " But hast thou got an argument?"
" The face of love." " The faith of common men?"
" 'Tis what they hear." "The faith of those who know?"
" 'Tis what they see with their own eyes." My words
Such rapture to his spirit brought that he 615
Unravelled knotted secrets unto me.

The Nine Discourses of the Friend of the World

1

The world no curtain casts upon the Lord,
The water's surface does not stop a plunge.

2

Birth in a different world—how fortunate
To conquer for thyself another youth! 620

3

Beyond death is the Lord who's life itself,
All unaware of how the people die;
Though we are but unpinioned birds, yet we
Are more informed of death than God Himself.

4

And what is time? A sweet with bitter mixed, 625
A blessing boundless joined to terror great;

Both towns and woods are targets of its wrath,
Its blessing is that it doth pass away.

5

A heathen's dead; how can a holy war
630 Be waged against a corpse! Perpetually
The faithful battles with his self, and swoops
On it much like the leopard on the roe.

6

An infidel who in his temple wakes
Is better than the pious who sleep in mosques.

7

635 Who evil witnesses is blind of eye,
For nowhere doth the sun behold the night.

8

Enclosed in earth, a seed becomes a tree,
Enclosed in earth, man bears a darkened fate.
From earth the seed derives its very growth
640 Till it doth hunt and capture solar rays.

9

I asked a flower, " Thou whose breast is torn!
How gainest thou thy tint and fragrance from
The earth and air?" He said, "O frenzied seer!
As thou extractest speech from lightning mute.
645 My longings have endued me with my life;
My ardour's hidden deep and thine revealed."

The Appearance of Sarosh

The seer in rapture sealed his lips, as though
He sundered his self from the world. His zeal
In one sweep carried him in ecstacy
Till magic of the self's expression gave 650
A being new to him. Without him gleamed
Nor light nor life; his presence turned each grain
Of sand to Mount Sinai. A damsel soon
Emerged in that charm-laden starless night
Who lit it like a star. Unto her waist 655
Her hyacinthine tresses reached; her face
Illumined down and dale anew. All bathed
In vision, drenched in ecstacy she was,
And yet undrunk. Her lamp of thought revolved
With artful, infinite variety as 660
The ancient sky. And on that chandelier
Were pictures colourful; a hawk upon
A dove, a leopard on a roe. I said
To Rumi, "Thou who secrets know'st! reveal
This one to me whose insight's small " He said, 665
"This figure with a silver gleam was born
Out of a vision of the Lord. Then with
A restless urge to show herself she came
Where being blossoms forth. A wanderer

670 In alien lands is she, a bough cut off
Like thee and me. Sarosh she's called, her rank
Is high as Gabriel's; she can transport
The sense and then restore it too. Our buds
Bloom forth but with her dew; her breath revives
675 Dead fires. She makes the poet's plectrum strike
The lyre of human heart ; she rends the veils
Of beauty's canopy. A universe
Her symphony contains, now for a while
Gain from her ode the fire that kindles it.

The Song of Sarosh

680 Upon a mirage, I
Fear, thou dost row thy ark ;
So sailed thou veiled in life,
And veiled thou'lt death embark.

When Razi's[1] antimony
685 I washed off from my eyes,
To me the book then taught
Why nations fall and rise.

O lightning, strike each field,
Each garden, down and dale,
690 Or thou wilt merely lie
In depths of clouds, death pale.

1 A famous commentator of the Holy Qur'an

I long searched in the west
Until I came to know,
Men, tall and foliageful,
This desert does not grow. 695

If thou fulfilment seek'st,
Extend thy deep desire,
Rose! as thou perfume claimed,
Now garden win entire.

The ego too will die, 700
O *zahid*, I agree,
This bubble owns a storm,
And this thou fail to see.

This lovely melody
Is not from nature's lute, 705
A hourie far away
From heaven blows her flute.

JOURNEY TO THE VALLEY OF YARGHAMID WHICH THE ANGELS CALL "VALE OF TASINS"

And Rumi, pilot of our love, whose words
Are heaven's fountain for the thirsty, said,
"A fiery verse doth leap out of the flame 710
Of 'God is Great.' And with this song mere dust
Doth like a garden blossom forth. It shakes

The skies. It testifies the Truth. On mere
Faqirs it monarchy bestows. It makes
715 The blood flow faster in the veins and turns
The heart more wakeful than e'en Gabriel's.
How many poets with the spell of art
But rob the heart and satanise the sight.
The bard of Ind—may not the Lord forsake
720 Him so—his soul knows not the bliss of speech;
For, in his hands, love falls to pandering,
And faith to idolatry, his word
Is rancid, and without a spark of pain;
Men with enkindled hearts regard him dead.
725 Much better is a word pronounced in sleep
Than verses, pretty and forgetful of
Their destiny. The poet's warp and woof
Is holy search; creates he and sustains
Man's high desire. And in a nation's breast
730 He is the heart; for if a people lack
In poetry, they are a heap of clay.
The inner fire creates a universe,
A verse unblessed with it is but a wail.
When poetry doth aim at shaping man
735 It claims the heritage of prophethood."
I said, "The mystery of prophethood

Unfold to me." He said, "Its signs exist
In nationhoods and its creations are
Our aeons all. Its breath makes eloquent
Mere pebbles and mere bricks; it is the field 740
Of which we are the harvest: all of us.
It catharises whole the flesh and bone,
To thought it lends the wings of Gabriel.
The cry that stirs within the universe
It makes articulate in Najm and Nur 745
And Nazi'at.[1] Its sun knows no decline;
And never can be consummation reached
By its deniers. Blessings of the Lord
Its free men propagate, and His dire wrath
Its Haydar's strokes convey. E'en if thou be 750
All wisdom absolute, thou never may'st
Escape from it as it alone reveals
The oneness of the body and the soul.
Tread fast upon the way of Yarghamid
So that thou may'st behold of prophethood 755
Four Tasins[2] on a moonstone wall engraved."

1 Titles of three chapters of the Holy Qur'an.

2. *Twasin* in the orginal is the plural of *tasin* Ta-sin are the abbreviated letters or *muqatt'at* in the beginning of chapter xxvii of the Qur'an Several explanations have been offered, mostly conjectural, but none very convincing Mansur Hallaj, the mystic, used them as titles of his chapters signifying ranks or stages. Here it means engravings on a moonstone wall presenting certain aspects of the prophets.

The urge of soul can find its path, unled,
The urge to own the wings of Gabriel.
A step or two completes an endless path,
760 This urge admits no stay, which only makes
It lifeless. Joyously I did proceed
To Yarghamid and soon could see its heights.
What words can paint the glory of that place
Around which ever seven stars revolved!
765 Its light gave earthly men a brighter soul,
Its clay collyrium for the angel's eyes.
God gave me longings to unravel all
The mysteries of the world and gave me eyes
And heart and words. From secrets now I lift
770 The veil and of the Prophet's Tasins tell.

TASIN OF BUDDHA

A Temptress Seeks Forgiveness

Buddha

Both ancient wine and youthful love are naught,
And seers regard even heaven's houries naught.
Forgo all things that may appear to last,
The seas and lands and hills and wastes are naught.
775 The reason of the west and the eastern lore
Are idols false, whose worshipping is naught.

Fear self alone and fearless cross this waste,
Because thou art and both the worlds are naught.
With eyelash points I have carved out a way,
Where sands and bourns and caravans are naught. 780

Illusion is the unknown; live
Yet worldly coils escape—'tis all.
The heaven, a gift of God, is naught,
The heaven that thou may'st win is all.
Thou seekest comfort of self? 'Tis naught 785
For misery of man moist eyes are all.
And songs and wine-lit winking eyes
Are fine, but a finer thing is all.
Time makes the rosy cheek as naught,
Kind thoughts, brave deeds alone are all. 790

The Dancing Girl

Bar all escapes for my
Enchanted, restless heart.
Thy one more curve of hair
May never let it part.

Such lightning thou hast flared 795
Within my breast, that I

Give to the sun and moon
Desires that cannot die.

Man seeks a presence nigh
800 His idols do reflect:
The urges of his soul
Love sometime doth deflect.

That I may sing the songs
That surge out of my soul,
805 To me, mere garden bird,
The garden's path unroll.

With my aspiring heart
Release my feet bound down;
I'll spurn a monarch's cloak
810 And don thy rustic gown.

He clove the hill with axe,[1]
Why people talk so soft ?
All mountains that exist,
Love carries them aloft.

1 Farhad the lover whom story credits with having dug a canal through a hill to win his beloved, Shirin

TASIN OF ZOROASTER

AHRIMAN TESTS ZOROASTER

Ahriman

BECAUSE of thee, all my creations wail, 815
To January thou hast my April turned.
Thou mad'st me reprobate; thy paintings all
Are coloured with my blood. Thy shining hand
Doth spell my death and thy Sinaic light
Props and perpetuates thy God of men. 820

The dupes alone can trust the word of God,
Who goes His way save the misguided ones!
He proffers rosy poison for a drink
His presents are the saw,[1] the worms,[2] the cross.[3]
Save prayer no refuge did Noah have 825
And prayer that availed him naught! Now dwell
In caves, in angel's company, and quit
The town, turn with a glance the earth to gold,
And scorch the sky with songs. In mountains like
A Moses wander burnt by radiant sights, 830
But prophethood abjure, whose priestly breed

1 Reference is to prophet Zakariyya (Biblical Zacharias) who was sawed along with the tree in the cavity of which he hid himself from his enemies

2. Prophet Ayyub (Job) suffered from a disease in which worms infested his wounds.

3. The crucifixion of Christ.

Are Mullahs. Lowly company perverts
A man, to ashes turns his nature's fire
Let saintliness suffice thee; for to love
835 A headache is what prophethood entails.
Arise and gather back thy scattered threads,
And live alone, renounce all multitudes.

Zoroaster

The sea of light has darkness for its coast,
A swelling flood I am within that sea.
840 What can a tide do save attack the coast?
The hueless pattern that none has beheld
Is drawn but with the blood of Ahriman.
To sharpen and to test one's stroke is life
And to reveal one's stature and one's self.

845 Through tests the ego gains maturity
Until it can reveal the Lord. The man
Who doth discern the truth sees not his self
Except through God; "No god save God," says he
And gives a new glow to his blood. For love
850 'Tis honour to be fevered so in blood,
The saw, the worms, the cross become its bliss.
And, in the path of God, whatever one
May face is fair—the Friend's unkindness too.

My eyes seek not an isolated Sight
Of God: I hold it sin to contemplate, 855
Without a congregation, beauty's view.
Alone we weave a fabric of desires,
We search a sight, but in community
The vision is fulfilled. Love, while alone,
Like Moses seeks the sight, when kindred souls 860
It kindles it doth claim a sovereignty.
Both while alone and while in company
We reach an excellence of love: two ranks,
Two aspects of surrendering, are they.
What's isolation? 'Tis to pass beyond 865
All temples. What is company? It is
To enter paradise, but not alone.
In isolation and in company
Though God is present equally, the first
Is but the start, the latter is the end. 870
Thou said'st that prophethood is headache mere,
See that when love matures, it seeks to shape
A manhood new. To tread the path of truth
In company is all eternal bliss,
To animate the world and be its soul. 875

TASIN OF JESUS

Dream of Tolstoy

In the mountain range of Seven Deaths reposed
A birdless, bare and barren vale, whose smoke
Could tar the moon, whose atmosphere had parched
The sun. There flowed a stream of mercury
880 Whose winding, intertwining waves gushed forth
Unheedful like the brook of the galaxy
Of high or low upon the way. Here dwelled
A groaning man sunk to the waist; nor clouds
Nor air nor water were allowed to him;
885 And parched he was with only mercury
To quench his thirst. And on the bank I saw
A slender maid; a hundred caravans
Her eyes could rob; and even Magians
Could infidelity acquire from her.
908 And evil through her spell was turned to good,
And good to evil. "Who art thou?" I asked,
"And what's thy name? What lamentations fill
The air around?" "Afrangin[1] is my name,"
She made reply, "a sorceress I am,
895 Possessed of Pharaoh's charms within my eyes."
Soon froze that silvery stream to ice and broke

1. Represents Western un-Christian civilisation

The bones of that young man. He cried aloud,
"Ah, woe betide my weird, alas, my wails!"
Said Afrangin, "If thou couldst see a while,
Remember thy own deeds, recall them now: 900
Remember Mary's son, the lamp of all
The universe, whose light doth shine in space
And what's beyond; and then recall the Cross
And Pilate and the pallid face; recall
What Christ performed below the sky, and what 905
Didst thou to him. Deprived of bliss of faith,
O worshipper of silver idols mere,
Thou didst not recognise the Holy Ghost
For flesh thou didst bargain thy soul away."

The maid thus, beauty-proud, did pillory 910
The man; her taunts, like lancets, pierced his heart.
He cried, "Thou art a wolf dressed like a sheep;
Because of thee, the Brahmin and the Shaykh
But sell their nations. Faith and intellect
Thy infidelities debased and love 915
Has with thy commerce abject grown and vile.
Thy kindness is a hidden malady,
Thy malice is a sudden death. Attached
Thou art to matter mere; thou hast kidnapped

920 Man from God's presence. And philosophy
Which solves the mystery of things has taught
Thee nothing but a Chengiz's thought and lust.
A man with an untarnished mind will hold
That thy offence is graver than the Sin
925 I have committed. For while Christ could breathe
Life into bodies dead, thou mak'st the flesh
The spirit's tomb. Know that whate'er I did
To Jesus' body, all his people do
E'er to his soul. Thy death revives the world,
930 But thou live on until thy painful doom."

TASIN OF MUHAMMAD

THE SPIRIT OF ABU JAHL[1] LAMENTS IN THE KA'BA

"MUHAMMAD seared my soul, his breath blew out
The light of Ka'ba, he beguiled all young
Men with the song of Caesar's, Khosroe's doom.
A charmer's he, his song enchants and yet
935 'No god save God' is heathenism itself,
Which doth denounce our gods, our father's faith.
To pieces has he smashed Manat[2] and Lat[3];
Revenge thyself on him, O universe.
His sorcery has lured all men from gods

1. An uncle of the Prophet who was the sworn enemy of the new faith
2 and 3. Two of the idols placed in the Ka'ba in pre-Islamic days

Perceptible and he has bound their hearts 940
To the Unseen. To fix one's gaze upon
Invisibles is folly; where exists
That which the eyes cannot behold? To bow
Before the unobservable: to err
Thus is sheer blindness which alone is bred 945
By this new faith. As God is somewhere placed
Beyond the sides of space; to pray to Him
Can bring to man no joy, no happy zeal.

"His faith doth cut across both fatherland
And race, denying excellence to both 950
The Arabs and Quraysh. He even holds
Both high and low and with his slave he dines!
He does not recognise free Arabs' worth,
And e'er repulsive negroes he befriends;
He mixes the brown with the black, disowns 955
All noble ancestry. This brotherhood
And this equality are foreign things,
Completely un-Arabian. I know
That Salman,[1] child of Mazdak,[2] has deceived
The son of 'Abdullah[3] and trouble brought 960

1. A faithful Persian companion of the Prophet
2 A Persian predecessor of Marx
3. Father of Muhammad

To our Arabia. The progeny
Of Hashim[1] is now torn away from self,
And prayers have bedimmed the glow that shone
In them before. These foreigners, all dumb,[2]
965 Are not of 'Adnan's[3] race; which of them claims
A Subhan's[4] eloquent and facile tongue?
This day has dimmed the noblest Arab's eyes,
Zuhayr,[5] my guide in desert vast, why dost
Thou not emerge out of the grave to break
970 The enchantment of the songs of Gabriel?

"O holy black stone! of our sufferings tell
That we bore at Muhammad's hands. Hubal,[6]
Who always grants man's prayers, snatch thy house
From infidels, and guide the wolves towards
975 Their flocks of sheep, and bitter make the fruit
Upon their palms. Pray grant the desert wind
A violent storm to show the miracle
Of prostrate trees. Manat and Lat whom both
My eyes affirm, pray do not move away,
980 And if thou must, leave not my heart. O stay,
'If thou must separate, do stay a while.' "[1]

1 Ancestor of the clan in which Muhammad was born
2 The Arabs, proud of their eloquence, called the non-Arabs dumb.
3. The ancestor of the Arabs. 4. An Arab orator.
5 A famous Arabic poet. 6 Name of an idol.

THE FIRMAMENT OF MERCURY

MEETING WITH THE SPIRITS OF JAMAL AL-DIN AFGHANI AND SAID HALIM PASHA

•

MAN moulded out of clay promotes his cause
When he confronts effulgence of his self.
'Tis either I caught in the web of life,
Or in my net existence is ensnared. 985
Am I who rent this azure veil? Have I
Outgrown the skies or they myself? Do they
Hedge in my mind, or has it their expanse
Encircled in its sweep? What thing is this?
And where? Within? Without? What mean the sights 990
That meet my eyes? And why? To another sky
I then spread forth my wings until in front
Of me I saw a different world, a world
Much older than my earth, with seas and lands
And hills and wastes. Formed of a cloud it had 995
Been spared the inroads of man, nor had yet drawn
A curve or image on the page of Being.
There, nature showed a virgin form as yet,
And none could scoff at it and none rebel.

To Rumi I remarked, "Delightful is 1000
The desert and the river's roar that through

1. Quotation from Imra al-Qays, an Arabic poet

The mountains flows—from where proceeds the call
To prayer, though I see no trace of life?"
He said, "This is the place for Friends of God;
1005 An earthly world it is, akin and close
To our own clay. For out of paradise
When Adam came, he stayed here for a time.
Its air has known the fiery sighs he heaved,
And heard his morning plaints. None enter here
1010 But those of lofty rank—the pious like
Fazeel[1] and Bu Sa'id[2] and seers great
Junayd[3] and Bayazid.[4] Now rise that I
May pray and gain a moment's erethism."

I went and saw two men who stood to pray—
1015 An Afghan[5] lead a Tartar.[6] Rumi who
In rapture rests eternally, whose looks
Are woven of desire and bliss, remarked:
"The East produced no better men than these,
Their fingers could unknot its tangled skein.
1020 For from the Prophet's lineage comes Jamal,

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1 and 2. Celebrated ascetics and mystics

3 and 4 Celebrated saints.

5 Jamal al-Din Afghani, the man who profoundly influenced the modern revival of Islam in almost the entire Muslim world.

6 Sa'id Halim Pasha, the Grand Wazir of Turkey, author of the famous book, *Islamlashmaq*

In pebbles and in stones whose converse stirs
New life. Halim, the Turkish leader, all
Humane, is gifted with a soaring mind
That vies with his high rank. To pray to God
With such men is real prayer, else it is 1025
Mere labour seeking heaven for its wage."

The reading of *Al-Najm*[1] in that expanse
Of silent desert by that strenuous man
Thrilled Abraham, gave Gabriel's soul a trance.
It made hearts yearn to be uncased, the graves 1030
It asked to be unclosed, and caused the dead
Men mutiny and say, "No god save God,"
And smoke burst into flame and David's soul
Poured out a symphony of ecstasy:
All veils were torn, all secrets bared, the Book, 1035
The Mother of all Scriptures, opened lay.

I, after prayer, moved ahead and kissed
His hand with reverence, while Rumi thus
Said unto him, "A grain of sand is he
That soars in heavens and contains a world 1040
Of longing in his heart. Naught will he see

1 I e. The Star, the title of the fifty-third chapter of the Qur'an

Except his self, and unpledged is his soul
Unburdened, free; the wide expanse of life
He swiftly doth traverse, its vastness all.
1045 In fancy I do call him 'Living Stream.' "

Afghani

O Living Stream, relate to me about
The world where we once lived; of Muslims tell
The story who, though rooted in the earth,
Are bright of sight like those who dwell in heaven.

The Living Stream

1050 The nation destined to transform the world
Is torn 'twixt faith and fatherland. Their faith
Is atrophied, their soul is dead, no hope
Have they in the vitality of truth.
The Turks, Iranians, Arabs lie benumbed
1055 With Europe's noose around their throats. The West
With its Imperialism has wrecked the East,
And Socialism bedimmed the flame of faith.

Afghani

The Western lords, in their deceit, have taught
The cult of nation-worship, have thus lured

The faithful from their creed. A centre they 1060
Themselves do seek, while riven ye remain:
Pray now bypass this Syria, Palestine,
Iraq. If thou canst separate the good
From bad, thou dost not bind thy heart to stones
And clods and bricks—the faith is naught except 1065
Transcending earthly ties so that the soul
Awakens to itself. Whoever says
"The Lord is great" is not confined within
The realm of space. Although unto the earth
The blade of grass belongs, yet it grows out 1070
Of it, a shame it would be if the soul,
The spirit pure, should die in dust. Though man
Grows in the world of clay and from it like
A flower draws his sap and sustenance,
A shame it would be if he should allow 1075
It to encompass him eternally—
And not surpass this stage. The body says,
"Be lost in dust, the dust of tracks." The soul
Replies, "Survey thou the infinitude
Of all this universe." O knowing man, 1080
Learn that the soul is not confined in space,
But that the liberated man defies

All gaols, and furious grows at this dark earth;
For hawks cannot perform the work of mice.

1085 The crust of clay that thou call'st fatherland,
Yemen, Iran or Egypt that thou styl'st,
Has one relationship with those who live
On it, in that from it their people dawned.
In that relationship if thou hast sight,
1090 Thou'lt see a point that's finer than a hair:
Although the sun dawns from the east, unveiled,
And with resplendent charms, it has no peace
From inner turbulence till it breaks loose
The bonds of east and west. Out from the east
1095 It rises flaming with the ecstasy
Of beauty till it holds the heavens in grasp.
Its nature is to rise above the east
And west, though 'tis related to them both.

Communism and Imperialism

That prophet uninspired by Gabriel,
1100 Belonging to the race of Abraham,
The author of *Das Kapital*, has truth
Concealed in falsehood—he possessed the heart
Of the believer and the heathen's brain.

The Westerners have lost the realm of soul,
For which they search the stomachs, though, it does 1105
Not borrow from the flesh its tint or smell.
With naught except the body Socialism
Concerns itself. Its prophet based his faith
On the equality of bellies, while
Fraternity lies in the heart of man, 1110
Its roots are not in clay and water laid.

Imperialism too fattens but the flesh,
It owns a gleamless breast devoid of heart.
It acts like bees that suck the flower's juice,
But, otherwise, leave all its petals gay; 1115
Its charms remain undimmed; and still evoke
The bulbul's plaintive songs, but all this scent
And play of colour is appearance mere;
Regard it not, but see reality.
Though it is hard to see the spirit's death, 1120
Yet call not flower what is really clay.

Gnaws discontent all through the heart of both,
Both fail to recognise the Lord, deceive
Mankind. The one for revolution thirsts,
The other for tribute: they're two millstones 1125

That pulverise the human kind. The one
Brings carnage with its art, its creed and craft,
The other from the body tears away
The soul, bread from the hand. In matter mere
1130 They sunken lie, with unenlightened souls
And bodies fair. Life means to burn and build,
To sow in humble dust the seed of heart.

Sa'id Halim Pasha

The East and the West

For Westerners doth reason furnish all
Accoutrément of life and for the east
1135 Love is the key of mystery. Love-led
Can reason claim the Lord and reason-lit
Love strikes firm roots. When integrated,
These two draw the pattern of a different world.
Let love and reason intermixed be
1140 To chart a world all new. The embers of
The West are cold; their eyes can see, their heart
Is dead; they're seared and scarred with their own swords;
Self-hunted victims all. Thou shalt not seek
From western vines the eager flaming drink
1145 Of ecstasy. The West is barren now,
No new age can she spawn. It is the fire

Of soul that gives an ardency to life,
And forms its symphony. To forge a world
All new is thy appointed destiny.

Kamal, enamoured of modernity, 1150
Proclaimed, "Let ancient patterns be effaced."
The coat of Haram's life is not renewed
If idols old are borrowed from the West.
No fresh tune trembles in the Turkish lute,
Her new is Europe's old. A vital breath 1155
Her breast doth not contain; her conscience too
A different universe cannot conceive.
Bound to the present world, its greedy flames
Have melted her like wax. The cosmos shapes
Unceasing wonders ever new; the stuff 1160
Of life is not blind following. A heart
Which is alive creates an epoch new,
And repetition makes its contact sag
With its own inner soul Hast thou the will
Of men of faith, then into thy own self 1165
And holy Book delve deep. A hundred worlds
Which are unseen as yet its verses hold,
And aeons in its moments are concealed.
A single world out of its myriad ones

1170 Encompasses this modern age, believe
If thou dost own a comprehending mind.
The man of faith is God's own symbol clear,
Each age apparels him in e'ernew garbs;
And if one be outworn, the Book bestows
1175 A different world on him, a new attire.

The Living Stream

The boat of earthly men is rudderless,
None knows the path towards the Qur'an's realm.

Afghani

All hidden in our breast yet lies a world,
That waits the bidding of the Lord to rise.
1180 A world without distinctions, free from race
And pigment, with an eve far brighter than
The western morn: a world all unprofaned
By kings and slaves; a world, a coastless sea
That can be likened to the faithful's heart.
1185 It is a world so beauteous that its seed
Was sown in 'Umar's soul but by a glance.[1]

1. Refers to the incident of 'Umar's conversion to Islam He had gone to slay his sister who preceded him in the faith, but hearing the verses she was reading from the Qur'an, he was so moved that he announced his conversion on the spot.

Its roots are constant, but its leaves and fruits
Are ever fresh; experiences new
It yields. Inside its heart a changeless calm,
A central peace doth dwell, though outwardly 1190
Each instant brings a revolution new
To it. Behold this world in thy own self,
I shall now tell thee of its principles.

PRINCIPLES OF THE WORLD OF THE QUR'AN

1. The Vicegerency of Man

In both the worlds are everywhere the signs
Of love; its mysteries include the son 1195
Of Adam. Unrelated to the world
Of wombs his secret is; he bears no bond
With Hamites or with Semites. hath no link
With Syria or with Rum. He is a star
With neither east nor west, which setting naught 1200
Doth know: whose axis corresponds to north
Nor south. His destiny entreasured lies
In words, "I shall create"[1]; the earth and sky
Are commentaries thereof. The grave and death

1. The Qur'an, ii. 30. "Said thy Lord to the Angels, 'I will create a vicegerent on earth.' "

1205 And resurrection and the crack of doom
Are facets of his soul; the fire of hell,
The lights of heaven symbolise his deeds.
He is the leader, he the prayer too,
He is the mosque, the holy sanctuary,
1210 He is the Pen,[1] the Ink and he the Book,
By portions are revealed the qualities
That in him latent lie; no limits mark
His state. His mere existence guarantees
The promise of all possibilities,
1215 Their measure is his golden mean. I sing
But of the shoreless sea which is his heart,
In which the aeons and the eras sunken lie.
What man contains in himself is the world,
And what the world cannot enclose is man.
1220 His vision makes the sun and moon unveiled;
And even Gabriel no access gains
Unto his solitude. His lofty rank
Is higher far than heaven; therefore know
On man's respect is civilisation based.
1225 Thou with a living heart, dost thou know life
Is but a unity beholding Love
In diverse sights. To one another bound

1. The pen with which God wrote our destiny

Both man and woman shape desire's world.
The woman 'tis who guards the fire of life,
Whose nature's of the mysteries of life 1230
A tablet—she struck the fire in me against
Her soul, her essence shaped man from mere clay.
The hidden possibilities of life
Her mind conceals, her light and burning grant
Eternity to it. She is a flame 1235
From which the sparks spread round, her burning shapes
The body and the soul. Her brilliance gave
My worth to me and I am what she limned
Me up. If bright of sight thou hast been made
By God, be pure to see her sanctity. 1240

I shall relate the secret of the veil
To thee, whose faith is rendered lustreless
In this age. Longing to create is like
A spark that flames the flesh and lights the world.
Whoever possesses it will enviously 1245
Guard it within himself. His image he
Will ever keep in mind and thus protect
His tablet from all alien patterns. While
Muhammad in Hira sought solitude,
For long he saw no one except himself. 1250

Our image thus was fashioned in his heart,
A nation thus emerged from his retreat.
Thou may'st deny the Lord but thou canst not
Deny the Prophet's glory. Moses-like
1255 Thou may'st possess a soul all luminous,
Yet, even then, deprived of solitude,
Thy thought will barren be. With mixing less
Imagination gains abundant life,
An urge, a keenness both to seek and find.

1260 Life's stages are both knowledge and desire
For which experience texture weaves. The joy
Of love is to create, of knowledge but
Unfolding things. The man of knowledge must
Seek company, but who creates doth crave
1265 For solitude. The eyes of Moses sought
Out of their love for search the sight of Being.
"Thou'lt see Me not"[1] possesses meaning rich,
Immerse thyself in this sea for a while
Ubiquitous are all the signs of life,
1270 They issue from the cosmic mind. Perceive
The stirrings of this universe itself,
And do not trouble the Creator to

1. The Qur'an, vii. 143.

Unveil and show Himself. Whoever draws
Creative patterns doth preserve himself
In solitude alone; it is a pearl, 1275
A priceless one which is set in his ring.

2. The Sovereignty of God

The man of God transcends all rank and class,
Being no one's master, no one's slave. The man
Of God is free: his kingdom and his laws
Are granted by the Lord, Who gives to him 1280
His customs, manners, faith and laws, from Whom
Proceed his standards of all good and bad.
Our wisdom only cares for selfish gains,
And disregards the good of others, while
God's revelation seeks the good of all, 1285
Their beneficence doth it keep in view.
'Tis just in peace and war, and favours not
For its own sake, nor turns hostile because
Of fear, while sovereignty in other hands
Save God's makes them remorseless for the weak. 1290
They're tyrants all. the sovereigns of this world,
Allegiance to them is lack of faith.

The world's oppressors build a fortress round
Themselves with laws, when they learn well their craft.

1295 As if a hawk, quick-pouncing, sharp of grip,
Doth take a dove to help him in his work;
And for their tyranny, they sanctions forge
With constitutions, which as useless are
As false eye-lotions for the blind. The end,
1300 The net result of all the laws of kings,
Is that the peasant is emaciate
And landlords keep on fattening on his blood.

Alas for the democracy of the West,
This doomsday trumpet's man's eternal death.
1305 The tricksters of the Occident, like fate,
With nations play as if they are mere pawns.
They play a game, both those who succour bring
And those who minister their wealth; against
Each other do they always ambush lay.
1310 Must needs their secret be disclosed: they are
All traders and their merchandise are we.
Their love of gold has dried their eyes, made them
So lustreless that mothers find their sons
But burdensome. Woe to a people that
1315 Would make the tree all sapless, lest it yield
A fruit. They kill the unborn in the womb,
Lest, if it grows, its plectrum strikes by chance

A music deep out of life's chords. Though rich
In colour, various in design, the West
Is but a tragic tale. Confined and caught 1320
Within its toils thou art, now liberate
Thyself, and take the Qur'an for thy guide.

3. The Earth Belongs to God

Man's chronicle both in the east and west
Narrates a single tale, the tale of war
And strife for land. A strumpet is this earth 1325
And all of us her lovers and her thralls,
For all, her blandishments; for none her heart.
These stones and rocks are not thy habitat;
They are for those who stay; a pilgrim thou,
How can the sleeping and the waking meet? 1330
The wanderer disdains the one who bides.
God styled the earth our source of livelihood
Which has been gifted free. Now learn this point
From me, O landlord! take thy bread and take
A space enough for burial from thy land. 1335
But do not claim it as thy own. How long
Canst thou keep company with it? Thou art
While it is naught. Thou hast reality,
A structure, while all this vast earth is but
A mere expression of a nothingness. 1340

Thou art a hawk, traverse the heaven's space,
Out spread thy feathers and shake off the dust.
"The earth belongs to God": its secret truth
Is manifest; a heathen is the one
1345 Who fails to comprehend this blazoned word.

I do not say forsake the world of form
And fragrance; no, it is thy wealth, thy fief.
Choose thou the pearls out of its grains of sand,
Smite all its mountains with thy axe, and draw
1350 A light from thy own self and let it strike
Against its fire. But do abjure the creed
Of idol-fashioners; carve out a world
According to thy heart's desire. Dote not
On tint and smell, on matter's trappings all.
1355 The heart is God's own temple, dedicate
It but to Him. Dost know what means to die
Without a shroud or wreath or honoured grave?
It is to lose oneself in silver, wife
And sons. Whoe'er engraves the words, "No god
1360 Save God" in his own mind, encompasses
The world entire, dissolves it in his self.
Not hunger and not nakedness is *Faqr*,
Nor dance of rapture feined; equate it not

With mere asceticism; it is a state,
A supreme, master state of sovranty. 1365

4. Knowledge is a Great Good

The Lord has said that knowledge's a great boon,
Wherever thou may'st find it, grip it fast.
For it bestows the wings on word and sound,
To pebbles grants the purity of pearls.
It can approach the pinnacle of skies, 1370
That from the eyes of the sun it may snatch out
The sight. Its treatise doth explain all things,
And with its efforts destiny is linked.
If it demands a bubble from the sands,
It straight is offered; if it asks the seas 1375
To show forth mirages, the seas obey.
Upon the events of the universe
Its gaze is fixed, so that it may reveal
Its basic principles. And if it binds
Its heart to God, the rank of prophethood 1380
It can attain: if it forgets the Lord
It then descends to infidelity
Deprived of an enkindled heart its light
Becomes a darkness for the seas and lands.
Its rouge defiles the world, its spring denudes 1385

The tree of life; the seas, the meadows green,
The mountains and the gardens are besmirched
And ravaged by its bombs. Its fire devours
The heart of Europe which destruction loves.
1390 It makes the march of time all dolorous,
And robs the nations of their wealth. Its strength
Befriends but Satan who its light doth turn
To his own fire. To murder him is hard
Because he lies all hidden in the depths
1395 Of hearts. Far better would it be if thou
Convertest him to faith and slay him thus
With the Qur'an's mighty sword. I seek refuge
From power lacking grace; I fear the state
Of separation which no promise holds
1400 Of union. If it be divorced from love,
Then knowledge is but Satan's progeny;
But if it blends with love, it joins the ranks
Of high celestial spirits. Love-bereft
All knowledge is but cold as death, the shaft
1405 Of intellect its target fails to reach.
But let love's sight restore a vision fresh
To one who is blind and so in darkness gropes;
And make a Haydar[1] of this Bu Lahab.[2]

1. The fourth Caliph after the Prophet
2 He remained all his life an active opponent of Islam.

The Living Stream

Although thou hast revealed its principles,
That world as yet is veiled. Why doth it not 1410
Display its radiant face, and thus emerge
Out from our conscience's depth? This rotten globe
That lies before us gives the nation rest
In but its moulded clay. The fire is quenched
Of Kurds and Tartars—Is the Qur'an dead 1415
Or are the Mussalmans a race defunct?

Sa'id Halim Pasha

The faith of God stands in a worse disgrace
Than infidelity; the Mullah makes
New heathens. While we see a drop of dew
Expand to oceans, his constrictive sight 1420
Reduces seas to trickles. I have seen
The Holy Ghost bewail the sad misdeeds
Of this strange pedlar of the book. His heart
Is heedless of celestial spheres; he reads
The Mother of Books as but a tale He naught 1425
Partakes of wisdom of the Prophet's faith;
His sky is starless and confined his sight,
His interests blind; his slanders and his rant

Divide a nation into hostile camps.
1430 Before the Mullah and his school, the book
And all its secrets are as the sun's light
To one born blind. His creed is brawling mere
Contrasted with the heathens' plans of war.

The man of faith, the soul of earth, has turned
1435 To solitude: convey to him my word;
"O thou whose faith sustains the faithful's life,
Whose breath to a people lends stability;
Thy rule is to preserve the Qur'an great,
Thy creed to give an utterance to truth.
1440 Thou art a Moses, must thou bend thy head?
Show forth the Shining Hand from out thy sleeve,
Narrate the history of the nation which
Was called immaculate, and tell the roes
How vast the expanses are. Thy nature draws
1445 Its light from Mustafa and is aglow,
Tell us again what is our destiny."

The man of faith gains form and substance all
From none except Him. Constantly he feels
The stir of life afresh; each moment comes
1450 To him a glory evernew like God's.

Now tell again the ancient truths; explain
To all the faithful what doth mean the verse
"Each day."[1] True that the caravan has fixed
The Haram as its goal; true that its heart
Is occupied by God alone; indeed, 1455
I do not say the path has changed or strayed;
But what I say is that the caravan
Is differently composed, its sight distraught.

Afghani

Hast thou partaken of the opulence
Commanded by the Prophet's words? Said he, 1460
"A foreigner is faith, the faith divine,
In all this world." Shall I explain to thee
This virgin truth? The alienness of faith
Is not detachment practised by the men
Of prayer. For the one in quest of truth, 1465
The alienness of faith, and forms diverse
It takes with changing times, is of the Lord
A sign all rare If thou canst see, then grasp
This point and bind anew thy heart to all
Its symbols manifest. so that thou may'st 1470

1 The Qur'an, lv 29

Thus hold and capture a new age. None knows
The secrets of the book; the men of East
As those of West are sore perplexed; they heave
And pant and blindly grope. A pattern new
1475 The Russians, though, have drawn, yet they have snatched
The daily bread of men, disrupted faith.
Look at the truth, seek nothing but the truth
And speak it always unafraid, unbent;
Convey to them a word or two from me.

AFGHANI'S MESSAGE TO RUSSIA

1480 The Qur'an has an aim and end, its own,
All different from the custom and the law
Of Mussalmans, now fireless are their hearts,
Since Mustafa has ceased to dwell in them.
The one who owns the faith has plucked no fruit
1485 The Qur'an yields, I've seen his cup contain
Nor bubbling wine nor dregs. He himself broke
The spell of Caesar, himself occupied
The thrones of kings. The tree of empire grew,
Till in imperialism his faith was dyed.
1490 Imperialism affected sense and sight,
Warped and distorted the entire way of life,

O thou who buildest on foundations new,
Hast torn thy heart from ancient ways, thou art
Like us who broke the bones of monarchy.
That thou may'st light the lamp of thy heart, learn 1495
From us an object-lesson—steadfast be
In battle, and wind not round idols old.
This wrinkled world now needs a nation new
Which can both cheer and warn, both soothe and smite.
Thou hast directed thyself to the East 1500
Again; thy destiny in fact is linked
With what befalls the nations of the East
Thou hast enkindled in thy soul a fire
All different and thy mind beholds new days
And nights. Now senile is the law, the faith 1505
Of Europe; on that temple obsolete
No longer gaze. Since thou hast done away
With ancient gods, proceed from "no" towards
"Except"[1]; abandon "no" if thou dost quest
For paths of permanence, that thou may'st live. 1510
O thou that seek'st an order for the world,
Hast forged for it a basis all secure?

1. Reference is to the article of faith in Islam "There is no god except the Lord.'

Thou hast erased all ancient tales, thy thought
Illumine now with the Qur'an's light. Who gave
1515 The dark-complexioned men the Shining Hand?
Who blazoned forth the news "No Caesars now"?
Forsake the multi-coloured sights and by
Rejecting Europe realise thyself.
Art thou aware of all the wiles and cant
1520 Of Westerners, then spurn their fox-like ways,
And be a lion. What is to be a fox?
It is to seek a mess of pottage mere,
To live by bread alone. The lion of God
Pursues the goal of liberty or death.
1525 Divested of the sanction of the book,
All prowess is but crooked, jackal-like.
The Qur'an inculcates a quality
Of *faqr*, which is the very quintessence
Of sovranty: a *faqr* which indicates
1530 The fusion absolute of prayer and thought.
No thought completes its reach except by aid
Of prayer. And what is prayer? It is to school
And to discipline thy desire, a work
Done by the soul, not by the mouth or lips;
1535 And from the depths of prayer a flame doth rise
Which lights the heart of man. Thy temper knows

Not what it be. O thou that smitten art
By graces of philosophy alone,
Its revelations I convey to thee.

A fatal warning for the rich, a sure 1540
And certain succour for the destitute
Is what the book implies. Seek thou no good
From money-seekers for "no righteousness
Shalt thou attain until in charity
Thou spend"[1] thy store. The gifts of usury 1545
Are strife, and systems that know not the joy
Of noble lending; and such blackened souls
And hearts like granite which indeed convert
Man to a brute. It is legitimate
To seek one's livelihood from land, which is 1550
Man's source of profit, yet but God's estate;
The man of faith doth hold it as a trust.
The owner being the Lord. And save the Lord
All things shall die and cease. Because of kings
The streamers of the Lord are lowered down; 1555
And towns and cities are laid desolate
A common source provides our sustenance,
Man's family is "like a single soul."[2]

1 The Qur'an, iii 92
2. The Qur'an, xxxi. 28 Most of the lines in this stanza allude to various verses of the Qur'an

When in the world the pattern of the book
1560 Was drawn, it rubbed out that of popes and priests.
What dwells within the heart I may disclose:
'Tis no mere book, it is a different thing
Which, when it soaks the soul, doth change it all,
And, with the soul transformed, the world as well
1565 Is shaped anew. Both immanent and clear,
Both open and concealed, it is a thing
Quite like the Lord Himself; abundantly,
Enduringly alive and bursting forth
In utterance supreme. Implicit are
1570 In it the destinies of East and West,
Let thy imagination dart its beam
Like lightning. Said it to the Mussalman
Surrender life[1]; "give all that thou possess
Beyond thy needs."[2] An order and a law
1575 Entirely new thou hast created, now
Let it be focussed in the Qur'an's light
And so examine it again awhile.
Do listen to the silent notes of life,
Its high and low, and know its destiny.

1. The concept is inferred from the Qur'an, ix. 111.
2. The Qur'an, ii 219.

Deserted is our tavern and the cups 1580
Are wineless ever since the Saki has
Forsaken us. What melodies unheard
Sleep in the Qur'an's harp; and if our bow
Should fail to strike them forth, then destiny
Can send a thousand other minstrels. For 1585
The word of God doth not depend on time
Or place or nations; no, it far transcends
The words of even those who utter it.
It is above, apart, it needs no land,
No Rum or Syria, for its home. If God 1590
Removes it from us, He may then assign
It to a people new. What do I see
In Mussalmans except blind following
And sterile doubt? I shudder at the thought.
I fear the day when they will be deprived 1595
And disinherited of fire divine,
Which will enkindle then quite other hearts.

Rumi Demands of Living Stream "Bring Forth a Song"

How these words did impinge upon the soul
Of Rumi, I alone could know. Compact
Of ecstasy and pain he heaved a sigh, 1600

A sigh that pierced one's breast; and from his eyes
Tears flowed, tears crimson and of richer hue
Than martyrs' blood. The arrows of his glance
Shoot but the hearts of men; he looked towards
1605 Afghani and thus spoke, "Quite like the clouds
Of ruddy dusk, the heart must be immersed
In blood; and hands must never cease to knock
At God's own gate. A running stream is life,
If hope sustains it, and the loss of hope
1610 Is but eternal death" And, after him,
He said to me again, "O Living Stream,
Let verses in our being flame a fire.
Our camel is infirm and cannot bear
The litter's burden, so the driver's song
1615 Must poignant be Affliction tests the pure
And noble men; so let the thirst increase
Of those who're parched. Like Moses, cross the Nile,
Embrace the flames and be an Abraham.
A song that wafts the fragrance of the Friend
1620 Doth lead a wandering nation on to him."

THE SONG OF THE LIVING STREAM

This rose and tulip bright,
Which seem to stay and glow,

E'er restlessly speed on,
Much as the breeze doth blow.

The meanings new I seek 1625
Where shall I find and sing?
The pub, the mosque, the school,
Bare, barren is their spring.

Learn from thy self, and let
That word thy being claim, 1630
For in this monastery
Like Moses none's aflame.

These dervishes, with hair
Unkempt, and cloaks dirt-gray,
Go in the quest of cleaner life! 1635
—Or aught else canst thou say?

What Harams new they've made
Within their Haram old?
To one thing once they turned,
Now differences are bold. 1640

I worry not that we
Avoided crucial tests,
But that the company
Is rudderless and rests.

THE FIRMAMENT OF VENUS

1645 BETWEEN the sun's effulgence and myself
Was space, whose layers, tier on tier, became
Cold barriers that held a hundred screens
In front of me, and veiled the fiery sight.
Thus filtered it enkindles all the more
1650 A silent, smouldering fire within the heart,
Which animates and shoots through all the leaves
And twigs and fruit of life. Its fever makes
The ruddy blood surge in the tulip's veins,
And tosses waves and streams in ceaseless dance.
1655 Thus, disengaging self from space, from out
The earth is born the Spirit Pure, who treads
On paths with deaths and resurrections strewn,
Whose wealth is frenzy of the heart. He dives
In space of a hundred azure vaults and then
1660 Emerges all undrenched. His Haram's he,
And his own Abraham[1]; an Ishmael[2]
In supreme resignation of the self.
To him, the nine skies are but Khaybars nine,
And, on their fortresses, he makes assault

1. Abraham built the Haram in Mecca.
2. Allusion is to the readiness with which Ishmael agreed to be sacrificed by his father, Abraham, at the behest of God.

Like Haydar boldly. This unresting war 1665
Of every moment catharises him,
And thus in wisdom strengthened, nimble made,
He soars in vastness of the light, assails
Both Gabriel and houries till "his sight
Swerves not"[1] and he the rank of God's slave gains. 1670

I know not where I am except that I
Stand far from friends. Who share my sight can see
A raging war in me, unfed by hosts
And steeds. The strife of faith and disbelief
None knows about; like Zayn al-'Abidin[2] 1675
My soul is left alone. None knows the bourne
And none the path, what lights the way except
My song? While all the sages and the youths
Lie in the ocean drowned, a lonely soul
Has struggled to the coast. The prison bars 1680
I have unlocked; forlornness I bewail
And union fear. If union be the end
Of love, beware! More blest than this are sighs
And fruitless plaints; the wanderer whose soul
Seeks ease gains not his goal. The heart I have 1685
Doth every moment seek a fresher world

1 The Qur'an, liii 17
2. Husayn's son who was left alone after the battle of Kerbala.

Aware of all my states of mind, my guide
The Pir of Rum said, "Dost thou seek a world?
Behold it here. Moved by the hand of Love,
1690 We are but pawns. Before thee Venus stands.
A world it is of water formed and clay,
And covered, Haram-like, in sable sheets.
Let thy glance pierce its muffling clouds and burn
Its screens. Here thou may'st see the ancient gods
1695 That live in it. I know them one by one.
They're Baal, Mardukh, Yauq and Nasr and Fasr,
Ramkhun and Asr and Gasr, Manat and Lat.
The temper of this Abrahamless age
Doth give to their existence firm support."

The League of Ancient Gods

1700 The lightning lost its flash in thickening clouds,
As black as night, while violent blew the wind.
And in the air suspended stood a sea
Whose fringes torn were unadorned with pearls.
It had no coast, its waves were turbulent,
1705 Though never locked in combat with the wind.
And Rumi and myself in that black sea
Were like a thought in darkness of the mind.
He was a rambler great but I unschooled,

My sight was sore and strained, my eyes travailed.
I told him every time, "My vision fails 1710
And can see no new world," till glimmered forth
The mountains, vales and hills The mounds and wastes
Held spring in their embrace; the vernal breeze
Was fragrant blowing from the hills and near
The springs upon lush verdure sang the birds. 1715
That balmy air did make the body firm
Enlivening the vision of the soul.
As I surveyed the glad sights of its hills
And dales, I saw an even tract of land,
A vale whose dust outmatched the quality 1720
Of nectar e'en. There dwelt the ancient gods:
Of Egypt one, another was the lord
Of Yemen, while the third and fourth belonged
To Iraq and Arabia; and one
Was called the god of union and his match 1725
Was separation's lord: one of them traced
His descent from the sun, in wedlock joined
To a daughter of the moon; another had
His eye on Jupiter's own spouse. One held
A two-edged sword in hand, around the neck 1730
Of the other an adder wound. Each one of them
Feared lest the word divine be breathed, and each

Frustrated felt by the stroke of Abraham.
Said Mardukh, "Man has run away from God,
1735 With neither church nor shrine he's satisfied.
To gain new visions he has now returned
To ancient times, whose monuments bestow
New bliss and make him tell of my great days.
A new tale doth the march of time narrate,
1740 And from that world blow fruitful winds." This made
Baal sing in wild transport a melody,
Wherein he thus my secrets did disclose.

THE SONG OF BAAL

Man could behold no God beyond the sky
Although this blue veil he did tear,
1745 What dwells within his heart save fleeting thoughts
Like waves that rise and disappear?
The tangible alone gives his soul bliss,
Old days, O Hope! will now return,
Live long, O West, thou of the East aware,
1750 Out of our graves hast made us turn.
Our age has come, O ancient gods, our age!

The Unitarians' gathering's broken now,
With hearts untouched by thrill divine,
Their company's hushed, forsaken are their cups,

They who once quaffed but Gabriel's wine. 1755
Torn from the Lord, bound to the fatherland,
Thus have the free their freedom sold;
The Haram's keeper wears the denier's thread—
Whose glory on him takes its hold.
Our age has come, O ancient gods, our age! 1760

The blissful days have to the world returned,
No faith, but race and state shall glow;
No fear have we now of Muhammad's lamp,
At which a hundred Bu Lahabs blow.
Although the sound "no god save God" still comes, 1765
The mouth'll be mum if sealed's the soul;
Charm of the West gives Satan life anew,
God's brilliant day in gloom doth roll.
Our age has come, O ancient gods, our age!

Men free from cords of faith are our men, 1770
So snap the cords, cut them away;
We gave a prayer devotionless to them,
Till hard it is for them to pray.
They thrill enough now get from music gay,
What bliss is there in prayer? 1775
Much more than for the Lord intangible,
For idols visible they care.
Our age has come, O ancient gods, our age!

Descending into the Sea of Venus and Visiting the Spirits of Pharaoh and Kitchener

The seer of Rum, possessed of blissful prayer
1780 And smashing stroke like that of Abraham,
In a state of ecstasy sang forth this song,
Which made the ancient gods to bow in prayer.

Song

Recall the days that thou hast spent,
And measure what is yet to be,
1785 Shake off thy ancient slumber now
And let thy mind new vistas see.

> Time is the charioteer of love,
> On which his palanquin moves through;
> Go past these morns and eves if thou
> 1790 Dost claim to be a lover true.

My teacher said to me, "Dost thou
Behold how frail the world is set?
Its prizes all, and all its pains,
Deserve thy absolute neglect.

> 1795 "If thou desirest to abjure
> The world and go in quest of love,
> Then thou must first forgo thy life,
> Thy dearest life, all things above."

I said, "The idols in my heart
Are many and for them I fear." 1800
He said, "This idol-house entire
Thou'lt have to break and shatter clear."

And then he said to me, "My child, arise,
Adhere to me and none besides. These hills
And mountains where no Moses dwells, which snow 1805
Has turned to piles of silver, hide a sea
Bright like a pearl, and clearer, brighter from
Inside than from without, nor waves nor tides
Disturb its mind's eternal calm. Here dwell
Rebellious men, with power drunk; those who 1810
Put faith in the perceptible alone.
The one came from the east, the other from
The west, and both waged war against the men
Of God. The staff of Moses this one bears
Upon his back, a dervish's sword has cut 1815
In twain that one. In the bosom of the sea
Doth Pharaohs lie all parched, embittered by
Dark death. The doom of the oppressors shows
A sign of God. Thou place thy hands in mine
And follow me and fear no one. I shall 1820
Unmask the inner core of sea to thee,
As Moses bared the breast of the ocean once."

The sea unfolded itself unto us,
Or just the air assumed a watery shape;
1825 Its bottom was a weird and cheerless vale
Of close compacted darkness. Rumi read
Melodiously the chapter of *Taha*[1]
And from beneath the sea appeared the moon.
Amidst the cold and bare and rain-washed hills,
1830 In stupor blank and sore perplexed appeared
Two men, who looked at Rumi, then towards
Each other. Pharaoh said, "This morn! Whence comes
This flood of radiance? What shimmers here?"

Rumi

God's will irradiates all hidden things,
1835 The source of this light is the Shining Hand.

Pharaoh

I gambled, lost my cash of reason, faith,
I saw this light and knew it not. Behold
Me, all ye worldly men, all ye who toil
For loss. Woe to the people turned purblind
1840 By greed, who would not spare the dust of graves
In quest of precious stones. My body, that

1. The title of the twentieth chapter of the Qur'an,

Lies mummified, has silent lips to tell
The story of imperialism and grant
The sightless sight. Fed on disunity
Imperialism gains strength, till rupture brings 1845
Its end. This baleful doctrine seals the fate
Of lands and thwarts and falsifies their work.
A knowing heart from Moses I shall seek,
Alas! if I could meet him once again.

Rumi

Without a guiding light all governance 1850
Is raw, and of the Shining Hand bereft
It is a sin, for it seeks sustenance
Out of the privations of the governed—
Their weakness is its strength. Tribute supports
The crown's existence; and its giving makes 1855
Man weak like glass though he were flinty hard.
The gaols and bars and troops sheer pillage mean,
A sovereign is the one that needs them naught.

Lord Kitchener

A loftier purpose have the Europeans
In digging up of graves than precious stones. 1860
Of Egypt, Pharaoh, Moses they obtain
The story from the sights of ruins old.

And knowledge is a constant quest to bare
All mysteries, without search Wisdom's dead.

Pharaoh

1865 Research and knowledge disinterred my corpse,
But what was unearthed out of Mehdi's grave?

THE SUDANESE DERVISH APPEARS

On the water restless lightning glittered fast
Waves rose and fell. With heaven's fragrance came
The spirit of the dervish of Egypt.
1870 His fire melted pearls in oysters' wombs,
And the stone in Kitchener's breast. He said, "If thou
Hast sight, O Kitchener, see a dervish's dust
Has been avenged. The sky denied to thee
A grave save in the ocean's depths." His words
1875 Broke in his throat and from his lips escaped
A sigh to tear the hearts. He said, "Arise
O Arabs' Soul and like thy ancestors
Create new times. O Faysal and Fuad
And Ibn Sa'ud! how long will ye like smoke
1880 Wind round thyselves? Rekindle fire in hearts,
And bring into the world the day that's gone.

O Batha's land,[1] a Khalid now produce,
And sing the song of one God once again.
May tall and stately grow thy desert palms,
Why dost thou not bring forth a new Faruq? 1885
O world of musk-dark faithful men, in thee
I smell the scent of everlasting life.
Devoid of all desire to wander, how
Long wilt thou live, with alien hands to shape
Thy fate. How long wilt thou renounce thy rank? 1890
My bones sing dirges like the flute and wail.
Affliction dost thou fear? Muhammad said,
'Affliction brings catharsis unto man.'

"In Nejd I lie, while all my friends have gone
To Yathrab, O my camel-driver! sing 1895
A rousing song that thrills a camel e'en
It rains and virgin rushes do outsprout
From earth; I fear the grass will make my steed
Tread slow. The pangs of separation send
A wail forth from my soul, take thou the path 1900
That's parched and dry. My camel loves the grass
Thou leadest him, while on the thoughts of love
I dwell and love alone doth lead me on.

1. I.e. Arabia

The streams course through the sands; upon the hills
1905 The palms are washed and clean. Two gazelles run
Down yonder mound and for a moment drink
From the desert spring and on the wayfarer
Then cast their glance. The sand is soft as silk,
The camel's glide is smooth, but still I fear
1910 The clouds are dappled like the partridge's wings
And I am from my destination far.
In Nejd I lie, while all my friends have gone
To Yathrab, O my camel-driver! sing
A rousing song that thrills the camel e'en."

THE FIRMAMENT OF MARS

I CLOSED my eyes and tore myself away 1915
And set my course towards a different world,
A different time and space, until its sky
Our sun familiar reached, refashioning
The day and night. The body does not know
The soul, which lives in time and yet remains 1920
Quite out of it. All fires the soul accepts,
And in its glad embrace it holds each day
That dawns. Unaging it remains despite
The flight of time. The world-illumining day
Derives its radiance from the soul, from it 1925
Proceeds the ceaseless flux of day and night:
Do visit this well-spring of every world.

There was a towering observatory
That in its noose held e'en the galaxy.
Behold: is it the nine-domed sanctuary 1930
Of Khidr, or just the shadow of our earth?
I now would search its bounds, and now survey
The sky's expanse. The sage of Rum, the guide
Of seers, remarked, "It is the world of Mars,
Quite like our world, a spell of scent and hue, 1935
Possessing towns and streets and buildings high,

Its dwellers, like the people of the West,
Are skilled in arts, and they excel us far
In sciences of the body and the soul.
1940 The lords of time and space, they understand
The ether more than we have done. Round it
They have thus wound themselves that they have seen
Its every twist and turn. The heart of man
Upon our earth is tied to dust and dross,
1945 But in this world the soul doth sway the flesh.
Whenever a living heart abides in clay,
It doth transform it to its will. The soul
Provides desire and bliss, determining
Both union, separation for the flesh.
1950 Duality inheres in being here
Upon the earth: the flesh, the soul, the one
So tangible, the other unexpressed.
To us our soul in flesh is bird in cage,
Whereas the Martian vision's unitive.
1955 When separation's day comes to a man
Its smart adds to his zest. A day or two
Before the appointed time, he makes it known
To all. Not by the body is their soul
Sustained, environed in the elements
1960 'Tis not. To die's to draw the body in,

Returning to one's self from outer world.
Thou canst not comprehend it for thy soul
Is shackled by the flesh. Now for a while
Here roam: such peaceful quest as thou enjoy'st
God all too seldom hath allowed to men. 1965

A MARTIAN ASTRONOMER COMES OUT OF THE OBSERVATORY

An aged man with his beard white like snow,
In search of knowledge who had spent his years
Appeared. Attired like Christian monks, he had
The piercing eyes of Western seers. Though old
Was tall as cypress, his complexion beamed 1970
Like of a Turk of Merv. Well versed he was
In every school, his eyes revealed his deep
Profundity of thought And as he saw
A man, he like a flower opened out,
And in Khayyam's and Tusi's tongue he spoke. 1975
"The mould of earth, the slave of when and why,
Emancipates himself from bounds of space.
E'en clay ascends the sky without the help
Of aeroplanes: to those who stay he gives
The urge of wanderers." His words and speech 1980
Flowed like a stream, which made me lost in thought:

Is it a spell, is it a dream, that I
The secret word hear from the Martian's lips?
"Once in Muhammad's days there was," said he,
1985 "A man on Mars who did survey the earth;
And set his heart on travel through its vasts.
He flew through myriad regions of the air,
Till finally the desert of Hejaz
He reached. He wrote of what he saw in East
1990 Or West, his chronicle was lovelier
Than lavish parks of paradise. I too
Have been to Europe and to Persia,
The valleys of the Ganges and the Nile,
America and China and Japan;
1995 I sought the wealth deposited inside
The womb of earth: I have beheld its days
And nights and journeyed through both sea and land.
I know man's riots and his dinful strife
Although he is oblivious of our work."

Rumi

2000 I come from heaven but my friend belongs
To earth, undrunken yet inebriate;
A man detached he is, and Living Stream

He's named; perennially self-absorbed
At sight of Being he remains. We, who
Have to thy city come, do live inside 2005
The world, and yet we are not bound to it;
We quest for changing panoramas; now
Keep us thy company for just a while.

The Martian Seer

We stand in the Suburbs of Marghadeen
Of Barkhia, who was our ancestor. 2010
Farz Marz, inspirer of all evil, said
To him in heaven once, "What joy for thee?
For ages hast thou been a slave of God!
A better world exists compared to which
E'en paradise is all-too-brief a breath 2015
Of spring; it is a world by far above
All other worlds, above the great beyond
Of spacelessness; a world of which God knows
Nought, uninhibited, it is a world
Which suffers not a God to intervene 2020
And shake its poise; no holy book is there,
Nor Gabriel nor prophet nor the rounds
Of prayer nor prostration's dull routine
Are there prescribed." Spake Barkhia to him,

2025 "Away, thou sorcerer, and cast that world
In thy own shape!" So since our ancestor
Would not succumb to Farz Marz's lure, the just
God did bestow another world on us.
Now travel as ye may in God's domain,
2030 Observe the laws and ways of Marghadeen.

A Tour of the City of Marghadeen

With lofty buildings Marghadeen possessed,
A beauteous aspect that defies my words.
Its dwellers' looks were comely and their speech
Was nectar; plainly though attired, they were
2035 Suffused with grace. They knew the mysteries
Of the sun's alchemy, uncrushed by toil
For bread were they. Whoe'er among them sought
Gold would obtain it from the solar rays
As easily as we get salt from sea.
2040 Their science aimed at service; they disdained
To measure worth by lucre or by pelf;
Nor pence nor pounds they knew; they would not let
These idols be. The monster of machines
Dragooned them not; their skies were free from smoke
2045 And smear, their lamps shone bright; the farmer could
Enjoy the fruit of labour, unafraid

Of feudal lords; his husbandry would not
Entail disputes for water, unoppressed
It was by thought of others' share. No troops,
No armies clanged, and none derived from war 2050
And from rapine his livelihood. Their pen
On libel flourished not. No workless men
Would loiter in the streets of Marghadeen;
Nor did the wail of beggars gall one's ears.

The Martian Seer

No destitutes we know; no lords, no serfs, 2055
No rulers and no bondmen here exist.

Living Stream

The destitutes are so by God's decree,
And slaves and masters too Since He has shaped
Our destiny, our efforts nought avail.

The Martian Seer

If thou shouldst be embittered by thy fate, 2060
Seek from the Lord a fiat which will change
Thy destiny entire, He doth command
Fates limitless. Man sells his ego's wealth,
Discerns he not what fate should signify;
The point can be conveyed in simple words: 2065

If thou transform thyself thy fate will change.
If thou art dust, thou'lt only disappear,
If thou art stone, use shall be made of thee
To shatter glass. Art thou a drop of dew?
2070 Evanescence is then thy fate. Art thou
A sea? Then thou wilt last. O passing one,
Shall'st thou endure by fashioning idols old?
So long as thou art from thy essence far,
Thy self unrealised, thy thought will but
2075 Confine thee close: to thee will fate appear
A dungeon dark without a treasure, but
Let thy perspective change, it is a wealth
Which brings no grief. If religion should mean
To be a thrall to fate, it darkens more
2080 The indigent's all doleful lot. Let woe
Betide a creed that only acts on thee
As a soporific, a charm that snares!

Dost thou know whence the comprehending mind
Proceeds? Thine is a tenement of clay,
2085 How came this nymph in it? From what derives
Philosophy its might? And what endues
With power Moses' prayer? Whence the heart
And its experiences and its heave,

Its miracles? If thou canst make thy word
Communicate thy fire, and if thou hast 2090
In thee the flame of action, thine 'tis not.
All this is nature's vernal bounty which
The Lord sustains. A mine of pearls is life
Which thou but holdest in trust, its sovereignty
Is held by Him. What consecrates the man 2095
Of God is the effulgent mind; his end
Is only service of his fellow-men;
For service is the stuff of prophethood,
'Tis merely trade to seek reward thereof.

The air, the earth, the clouds, the gardens gay, 2100
The smiling fields, the mansions high, the work
Of brick and stone; sayest thou this opulence
Is thine? Remember 'tis but God's estate.
If thou regard God's earth as if it vests
In thee, what means the verse, "No mischief make"?[1] 2105
The son of Adam doth affiliate
Himself to Satan and his gift is war.
To his own use none dares appropriate

1. The Qur'an, ii. 11 :

When it is said to them :
"Make not mischief on the earth,"
They say, "Why, 'tis we
Who want to make peace !"

A trust; and so eternal bliss attends
2110 On him who to the Lord returns intact
His property. I grieve that thou shouldst steal
A thing; unworthy 'tis of thy own self!
Restore to God His realm, and thou wilt gain
Release from thy entanglement. For want
2115 Arose when thou wouldst claim as thine the thing
Which doth to Him belong. The man who fails
To venture out of matter's bounds, he breaks
His beaker with his stone. Thou knowest not what
Thy bourn is, what thy path, learn thou then this:
2120 It is thy attitude alone which doth
Determine value of external things.
A gem remains a gem so long as thou
Wilt prize it, otherwise it is mere stone.
But change thy view and find the world transformed!

Of the Damsel in Mars who Claimed to be a Prophetess

2125 We travelled numerous roads until we saw
Beside a town an open plain, a crowd
Was swarming there; and in the middle stood
A woman cypress-statured; but the glow
Of her complexion and her beaming brow
2130 Did not reflect the lustre of the soul.

Unsparkling was her word; her speech did not
Cohere; no unshed tears suffused her eyes,
Which lacked the ecstasy that longings lend.
Bereft her breast was of the leaping flames
Of youth and unabsorbent was her glass, 2135
Both blind and barren; she was unaware
Of love and all its laws, a dove she was
Whom love's hawk spurned. The seer did turn to us,
And said, "No maid of Mars is she; Farz Marz
Abducted her from Europe and he taught 2140
This wild, untutored girl the skill and craft
Of claiming propethood and let her loose
In this our world. She vows her faith to be
The final message, she describes herself
As having come from heaven; she would tell 2145
Of the relations of the sexes; she
Would bare the secrets of the flesh. Hear her
Explain in thy own language what she thinks
Will be the destiny of human life.

SPEECH OF THE PROPHETESS OF MARS

Tell me, O mothers, sisters, wives! how long 2150
Thou'lt like mere darlings live. To be beloved
Is to be vassals, to be tyrannised.

As we our tresses comb, we think we make
Of man our prey. But in reality
2155 Man is a hound while our mere quarry he
Pretends to be. And as he dances round
He fetters us. His frenzies and his love,
His anguish and his ardour and his woe
Are mere deceit. Fain would this infidel
2160 Burn incense at our temple: know 'tis cant
And all hypocrisy. But dolorous
He makes our lot. In union with him
There's poison while his separation's sweat.
To be his mate is torture sore. Beware
2165 This serpent's coils; let not his venom flow
Into your blood. Brings pallor to your cheeks
Maternity; emancipate yourselves
From marriage and its bonds, and so be blest.

My rapture doth augment itself as I
2170 Receive each moment revelations new.
That time is coming when with help of art
The foetus in the womb can be discerned,
When from the field of life ye harvest may
A son or daughter as ye chose. Perchance
2175 If it not correspond to your desire,

Destroy it, unafraid; ye have the right.
And other eras will succeed this age
Which will unravel further mysteries.
Then embryos can nurture find without
The uteri: they will not have to pass 2180
Nights, long and dark, their morning to achieve.
This creature, all compact of evil, will
Then die as primitive beasts disappeared.
The spotless tulip grows, emerging from
The earth, unblemished, and it bears no debt 2185
To dew. Life's potentialities unfold
Themselves of their accord; no need of bow
There is to pluck the music from its strings.
O oyster famished, rather die with thirst
In water than accept a drop of rain. 2190
Rise, war with nature till ye may rescue
The odalisque from bondage. In release
From bodies' union lies integrity
For eve. From man preserve and guard yourselves.

Rumi

Look at the creed of this new-fangled age 2195
The fruit of disbelief. Love is the law
And principle of life; a culture's soul

Is faith, and faith is love. A blazing fire
It is, externally; its core is bathed
2200 In light divine. Its fever doth beget
The urge for knowledge, which is sanctified
By its fanatic zeal. Unschooled in love
Religion lacks maturity. Learn faith
In company of those who worship love.

THE FIRMAMENT OF JUPITER

THE HOLY SPIRITS OF HALLAJ, GHALIB AND QURAT-AL-'AIN TAHIR WHO DECLINED TO LIVE IN HEAVEN AND PREFERRED ETERNAL WANDERING

MY ALTAR be my heart that leads me on 2205
To virgin wilds perpetually. When I
Sojourn it bids, "Arise! e'en ocean cramps
The one who knows the expanse of his self.
How can thy pilgrimage end when the signs
Of God are limitless? When knowledge sees 2210
It leaves the objects dead; and when the soul
Surveys it kindles life in them. The one
In reason's scale doth measure them, while in
The terms of insight weighs the other. Clay
Is all the one acquires, the other claims 2215
The Spirit Pure. The one can but perceive
The flash of radiance, the other lays
Assault on it and seizes it entire."

The thirst for new epiphanies makes me
Traverse the skies and wail like flute. 'Tis but 2220
The blessing of the noble one who cast
His fire into my soul. The caravan
Of the two who existence scanned soon reached

The bounds of Jupiter. A growing world
2225 It was around which many moons revolved.
No liquor in the tumbler of its vines
Yet laughed, nor from its dust did young desire
Yet sprout. The lustre of its moons would make
Its midnight blaze like noon, its nimble air
2230 Nor scorched nor chilled. As I looked up towards
The sky, I saw the star so close to me,
The awesome prospect all my sense besieged,
And changed perceptions of both far and nigh
And soon and late. I stood confronted with
2235 Three sacred souls, whose inner heaving fire
Could melt the world. A crimson aureole
Surrounded them; their countenances glowed
With fervour which e'er since the moment blazed
When God said, "Am I not thy Lord?"[1] the wine
2240 Of their own melodies did fill their cups.
To me said Rumi, "Be not lost; revive
The breath of flaming songs. Thou hast not seen
A love transcendent and detached; thou hast
Not quaffed this potent juice. And now behold,
2245 How Ghalib and Hallaj and Persia's maid

1 The Qur'an, vii. 172.

Have tumult flung into the Haram's veins.

These songs preserve the soul, which deathless grows,
And from the bosom of the universe,
Their constant incandescence they derive."

SONG OF HALLAJ

From thy own native earth 2250
Let flame an unborn fire,
For alien gleams, though bright,
Deserve not thy desire.

My eyes are loth to turn
When at the self they gaze, 2255
Though prospect of my love
The world entire enblaze.

I shall not sell this verse
To gain the Persian throne,
"With unsurrendered life 2260
My tribe no one can own."[1]

Most cunningly its troops
Though reason has arrayed,
Love too is not alone
Why be my heart dismayed. 2265

1. The translation of a line from Naziri, a famous Persian poet.

For cadences and strains
Thy fingers are not sharp,
Else thou canst strike each tune
Out of Salima's[1] harp.

2270 Of the shark-hunt narrate
A story unto me,
And do not say our barge
Has never crossed a sea.

Disciple I'm of him
2275 Who spurns to tread his feet
On routes where seas and wastes
And mountains do not meet.

Mix with the ones who throb
And heave with surging life,
2280 But e'er escape the one
Who keeps away from strife.

THE SONG OF GHALIB

Come forth, O spirits brave,
The heaven's mode we'll change,
Against our destiny
2285 Our heavy mace we'll range.

1. Represents the beloved in oriental poetry.

Law shall not cow us down
With gallows or with jail,
To buy us off our path
King's glittering gold shall fail.

We will not speak a word
Though Moses may entreat, 2290
E'en Abraham as guest
We will decline to meet.

We'll fight with them who claim
Tribute of what we grow, 2295
Out from the garden's gate
They shall untrophied go.

Upon our branches birds
In the mornings shall not rest,
With amity we'll turn 2300
Each one unto its nest

We'll turn the sun again
Unto the eastern sky,
And nought shall it surprise
We are cast in Haydar's die. 2305

THE SONG OF TAHIRA

If ever I could see
Full direct in thy face,
The contours of my sorrow,
The lineaments of my pain,
2310 Before thee I could trace.

To sight thy loveliness
I wander like the breeze,
On every path and street,
From every castle and door
2315 I go forth, I ne'er cease.

Ah, woe of separation,
From eyes my dear blood flows,
It ruddies rivers, rills;
And silent streams and springs
2320 Are coloured like the rose.

My sad heart wove thy love
In the texture of my soul,
It is its warp and woof,
In every stitch and thread
2325 It runs through the fabric whole.

When Tahira searched her heart,
She found there none save thee,
Its every veil and curtain,
Its every leaf and page 2330
She saw attentively.

The burning in the yearning lovers' breast
Did make my soul all turbulent again.
And all my unresolved problems raised
Their heads afresh and they fast stormed my mind.
A tempest in the sea of my thought raged, 2335
That rushed and roared against its crumbling coast.
But Rumi said, "Lose no time off thy hands,
O thou who wouldst unravel every knot.
Thy thoughts have so long caged thee, now 'tis time
That thou this doomsday cast into the world." 2340

Living Stream presents His Problems before the Sacred Souls

Why from the believer's bourn art thou afar?
Why choosest thou to live out of paradise?

Hallaj

The liberated soul that knows both good
And evil cannot be contained by walls
Of paradise. But wine and slaves and nymphs 2345

The Mullah's heaven constitute; the free
Attain bliss in eternal voyaging.
The Mullah's heaven has music, food and sleep;
But contemplation of the Being forms
2350 The lovers' paradise. The crack of doom
Is signalled to the Mullah by the blare
Of trumpet and the opening of graves;
But in the lovers' eyes, tumultuous love
Itself makes doomsday dawn. On myriad hopes
2355 And fears is knowledge based while love nor fears
Nor hopes. While knowledge at the universe
And at its grandeur looks and trembles, love
Is with its beauty drenched. While at the past
And at the present knowledge gazes, love
2360 Bids, "See what's yet to come." In bond with fate
Is knowledge chained and save to be resigned
What can avail it? Love no patience knows,
Undaunted and uncurbed, it contemplates
Existence in full scope; complains it not
2365 Even though its music drip with tears. Our heart
In thrall is not unfree; the shaft that burns
Within us did not dart from hourie's eyes.
For separation quickens fast our fire

And harmonises with our soul. No life
It is to live without a secret smart, 2370
Do learn to hold a fire beneath thy feet.
For thus the ego lives and thus it grows,
The very particle of dust becomes
The envy of the sun, when longing gives
It an immensity, the nine vast skies 2375
Are in its breast contained. As love doth charge
The old world's citadel, mere fugitive
And fleeting moments are eternities.

Living Stream

Both life and death are but the flux of fate,
Yet none knows of the nature of its sweep. 2380

Hallaj

One who makes fate his own accoutrement
And his free equipage, his fearful might
Both death and Satan dread. Brave men alone
Put faith in fate; a daring faith it is
On utmost power based; the mature ones 2385
Are ripened more thereby, while those who are

But callow and unfledged are flung into
The dark lap of the grave. When Khalid[1] had
This faith, commoved he the world entire,
2390 In us, it only tears our roots away.
Submission only suits the strong, the weak
Can wear this cloak but loosely. Knowest thou
What Rumi said, didst thou not read this verse?
"Once in the days of Bayazid[2] there was
2395 A worshipper of fire. A Muslim true
Did say to him, 'How fortunate it would
Be if thou couldst accept the faith, for then
Thou wouldst be saved and thou wouldst sway'. Spake he,
'Disciple, if faith means what Bayazid
2400 Reflects, then I completely lack the strength
To face it, for it is for past the reach
And straining of the soul.' " Nought can we do
Except to hope and fear; all cannot have
The daring to submit. O thou who sayest
2405 That life is preordained, and that the world
A rigid law obeys, thou dost not know
What fate should mean, for verily thou hast

1 An ever-victorious general of early Islam

2 A great Muslim saint,

Not seen thy ego or thy God. Confer
The faithful with the Lord, "We do as Thou
Wouldst will, be Thou with us." Their will obtains 2410
A corresponding fiat from the Lord,
And on their arrows fatal fate doth ride.

Living Stream

The misinformed disputed oft and hanged
The man of God upon a cross. To thee
The secrets of existence are unmasked, 2415
Couldst thou not say again what was thy sin?

Hallaj

The voice of resurrection shot its call
Forth in my breast: I saw a people who
Were hastening to their graves; the faithful lived
Much as the infidels; 'No god save God,' 2420
They said, but the reality of self
They did reject. Divine creation seemed
To them to be inane, because in clay
And water was it grounded. Kindled I

2425 The leaping fire of life in me and told
Its secrets to the dead. On the ego's based
The pattern of the world which is composed
Of love and terror both. Ubiquitous
Though 'tis, the ego is concealed withal
2430 Or it would dazzle vision. Yet its light
All divers fires contains and its Sinai
Lays bare the world. Each heart doth secretly
Communion have with it, within this grey
Old church. Whoever from its fire did fail
2435 To take his share died unaware of self.
Its light both India and Iran have
Beheld, but one who also sees its flame
Is rarely met. Of both its light and fire
I gave the tidings. Seest thou not my sin,
2440 My friend, my confidant? Fear for thyself
Thou too repeatest what I did, thou too
Wouldst lief attempt to resurrect the dead.

Tahira

The sin of an ecstatic soul begets
A younger universe; for boundless love

Tears veils apart, removes from sight the film 2445
Of dull familiarity. At last
It finds its final bourn in chain and cross;
If the beloved's street it has to quit,
It quits it not alive. This love pervades
Both towns and wastes: think'st thou the world could be 2450
By it abandoned? In the soul of time
It hidden lies. How in that dark recess
Has it been able to contain itself!

Living Stream

O thou in search perennial, reveal
What thou meant by this verse, "The dove is but 2455
A crust of ashes and the nightingale
A cage of colour. O undying wail
By what sign can be found a heart consumed?"[1]

Ghalib

Each diverse place dissimilarly bears
The impact of the wail that rises from 2460
The heart consumed. Because of it, the dove

1. A verse of Ghalib

All scorched lies; whereas the nightingale
Doth learn to garner hues. It may bring death
E'en in the lap of life; and in the span
2465 Of a single breath, it may revive one here
Annihilate another there. It is
A shimmering mosaic of colours, yet
Without a tint or shade. Thou dost not know
The portion of each heart within this world,
2470 This world of scent and hue, is measured by
Its cry alone. Immerse thyself in it,
Or pass beyond to where all hues do cease,
Till thou mayest track the anguish of the heart.

Living Stream

This azure vault contains a hundred worlds,
2475 Doth each one have its prophets and its saints?

Ghalib

The order of what-is and what-is-not
See carefully: each moment many worlds
Burst into life. Each throbbing, striving world
Is crowned by the Mercy of the Worlds.[1]

1. A name of the holy Prophet.

Living Stream

My understanding fails, do make it plain. 2480

Ghalib

Outrageous would it be to lay it bare.

Living Stream

Is this communion of our hearts futile?

Ghalib

To drag this point to utterance is hard.

Living Stream

With flames of longings thou art naught save fire,
'Tis strange thou canst not overcome mere words. 2485

Ghalib

Creation, order, guidance mark the birth,
The ultimate's the Mercy of the Worlds.

Living Stream

I have not caught truth's aspect yet. If thou
Hast burning fire in thee, consume me too.

Ghalib

Like me thou dost the reach of poesy 2490
Know well, its strings this thought may strain and break,

Like Moses are the children of the Muse,
Parnassus yet is not Sinai; they lack
The Shining Hand. What thou demandest of me
2495 Is heresy—beyond all words and verse.

Hallaj

Where'er thou seest a world of tint and smell
In which desire doth blossom out of dust,
It either is rewarded by the light
Of Mustafa, or wanders in his search.

Living Stream

2500 Fain would I know, though it be sin to ask
The secret of the essence which we call
By name of Mustafa. Is it a man
Or is it an indwelling essence which
But rarely manifests itself in life.

Hallaj

2505 The cosmos ever fealty makes to him,
Who called himself "His worshipper."[1] This rank
Is past thy ken, as he is all at once
A human being and yet an essence pure.
He is a man, yet pristine more than man,

1. An inadequate rendering of a word in the Muslim article of faith "There is no god save God, and Muhammad is His slave and His Prophet."

His core is neither Arab nor 'Ajam. 2510
"His worshipper" shapes destinies divers,
Both ruins and fabrics fine he doth contain.
"His worshipper" may lend increase to life
Or snatch it off, he is both fragile glass
And smiting stone. To be "His worshipper" 2515
Is different from the human state, and while
We are all waiting, he is waited for.
He is the essence and the source of time,
While dyed we are, he bears nor tint nor smell.
"His worshipper" knows neither morn nor eve, 2520
He had a beginning but has no end.
None of his secret is aware: he's but
The mystery of "No god save God"; which is
The sword, he is its cutting edge. Say plain,
"The Lord Himself is His Own Worshipper." 2525
The why and how of the universe is he,
Its secret principle as well. Until
Thou seest the meaning of "Thou didst
Not strike,"[1] mere verses shall unfold him not.
O Living Stream now leave all speech behind 2530
And in reality let thou be drenched.

1 The Qur'an, viii 17

Living Stream

I know not what love labours for. If it
Yearns for the sight, what means the sight, I ask.

Hallaj

To see him means to do as he ordained,
2535 Live in this world as our Apostle did.
Be the beloved of all living things,
Then see thyself and this will be his sight,
The *Sunnah* of his secrets is the key.

Living Stream

What means the sight of God Who owns nine skies,
2540 Nor sun nor moon without whose bidding moves?

Hallaj

It is to use God's templet first to shape
Thy self and then to shape the world entire.
When in the world, the pattern of the soul
Fulfils itself, all sights are made divine.
2545 How blessed is the one whose single sigh
Makes heavens to revolve around his place.
And woe unto the dervish who says, "God
Is great," and then draws in his breath and seals
His lips. God's will he doth not propagate

Around, he eats black bread but shirks to do 2550
What Haydar did. He seeks a cloister dark,
From Khaybar runs away, becomes a monk,
And kingship leaves. But if thou come to live
The pattern of creative truth, why then
The world becomes thy prey, and destiny 2555
Doth merely run abreast with thy design.
The modern age seeks war with thee, thou on
This heathen's tablet draw Truth's image sharp.

Living Stream

I know not how they, who their end attained,
Drew pattern of the Truth upon the world. 2560

Hallaj

At times with terror and at times with love
They wrought their way. But Truth doth show more bright
In love alone. Love is the better way.

Living Stream

O master of our secrets! how dost thou
Contrast the lover and the eremite? 2565

Hallaj

The hermit isolated doth remain
In this world and the lover in the next.

Living Stream

Should realisation end in nothingness?
And should life find its last repose in death?

Hallaj

2570 Our friends intoxicate themselves with cups
Which have run empty; 'tis sheer ignorance
To abnegate the self Dost seek thy goal
In death? It never can encompass life.

Living Stream

He who regarded himself much above
2575 The rank of man;[1] his flagon nor his jar
Contains e'en dregs. Our dust doth fly in skies,
Where lies the fire of that impoverished one?

Hallaj

Say little of that leader of all souls
With unfulfilment anguished; sore athirst,
2580 His primeval cut is filled with blood. We are

1. Satan.

But ignorant; he knows reality
And nothingness. His old revolt has taught
To us this secret that the fallen know
Delight of rising and that from the pain
Of less flows forth the joy of more. To burn 2585
In his fire is to love; without his flame,
No burning be. He is antecedent
In service and in love; therefore, unschooled
Man in his mysteries remains. Tear off
The cloak of orthodoxy that constrains; 2590
And from him learn the unity of God.

Living Stream

O emperor of all the soul's domain,
For but one while more do remain with me.

Hallaj

Impossible for us to be confined
To place, we only yearn to soar. To see 2595
And then to quiver is all we must do;
To fly in space unfeathered and unwinged.

ENTER LUCIFER, THE LEADER OF ALL SOULS IN SEPARATION

The luminous soul's company doth last
A breath or two but is life's substance sole.

2600 It passed but made love wail all louder still,
And reason gained from it a vision fresh.
I closed my eyes to treasure it within,
To make it grow and bloom within my heart.
But in a while the world went dark, all space
2605 To bounds of spaceless regions sombre turned.
And out of this pervading night did flash
A flame, from which appeared an aged man.
He was attired in black and smoke around
His person coiled. The sage of Rum informed,
2610 "He leads all those with separation sore,
He is all fire and holds a cup of gore.

"An ancient one who seldom smiles, speaks less,
Has eyes that pierce the flesh and search the heart.
A drunkard and a theologian both,
2615 Philosopher as well, at once he is;
Dressed as an anchorite, and diligent
Like priests in prayer busy. Union's bliss
Is foreign to his stuff, so he forsakes
Eternal beauty, chooses to live like
2620 An eremite, but since it is so hard
To tear away oneself from beauty, he

Cannot but spurn obeisance too. Do look
And realise his spiritual throes,
Watch how he doth travail, how he endures.
Immersed he is still in the blazing war 2625
'Twixt good and evil, and though he has seen
A hundred prophets, yet he dares deny."

His anguish seared my soul. A silent sigh,
In endless woe, I saw escape his lips.
He arched a glance at me and thus addressed, 2630
"Who always dwells in action more than me?
It is such toil that for one Sabbath I
Have not been free. I have no seraphin
Nor slaves, unaided by apostles is
My message sent. I have tradition brought 2635
Nor testament—though what a mortal blow
To those deep in faith's lore! None snaps the thread
Of faith as sharply as they do, none leaves
Like them the Ka'ba but a heap of bricks.
And my faith is not founded in the way 2640
They know, because in it there is no sect.
I left prostration off, and wrought a tune
Out of the clash of good and bad. But I

Am no denier of God, be not deceived
2645 By my exterior; see my inner self.
I would be mean of intellect if I
Denied the Lord, since in His Presence once
I stood. When I deny I but affirm
And what I say is better than what I
2650 Withhold. To share man's misery I for him
Accept the wrath and fury of the Lord,
I let flames shoot out from my field and make
Man reach volition from fatality.
My evil I display that thou mayest swoop
2655 On it or isolate thyself as thou
Mayest will. O man, release me from my flame
And straighten up my knotted task. O thou
Who in my noose art caught and giv'st me leave
To sin, live with the mettle of a man within
2660 This world. If thou compassion feelest for me
Remain a stranger to myself, my sweet
And bitter disregard, nor sombre make
My scroll. Pursuers in the world exist
On preys: till thou allow thyself to be
2665 A sport, all arrows I do point on thee.
Who soars need fear no fall; the hunter too
Can be frustrated by a watchful prey."

"Transcend thy cult of isolation now,"
I said to him, "Divorce is in my eyes
The worst of things."[1] "Disunion's day is filled 2670
With rapture," he replied, "its ache and throb
And quiver do compose life's music sweet.
Of union I shall breathe not even a word,
For fusion if I seek, nor I survive
Nor He remains." Thus talk of union made 2675
Him look distraught and strange, and anguish new
Assailed his heart. He fumbled in his fumes,
In which he in a while dissolved himself,
And from these winding vapours rose a wail;
How happy is the soul that feels its smart. 2680

THE WAIL OF SATAN

O Lord of good and bad, man's company
And commerce has degraded me. Not once
My bidding dares he to defy; his self
He realises not. And never feels
His dust the thrill of disobedience, 2685
Unlit as it is by the ego's spark.
The victim himself to the hunter says,
"Entrap me", from his pliancy I seek

1 A saying of the holy Prophet.

Refuge. Release me from this chase, recall
2690 My fealty of but yesterday. O woe
To me whose sinewy heart he has turned soft
And frail. His nature is effeminate
And feeble his resolve, he lacks the strength
To stand a single stroke of mine. A man
2695 Endowed with vision would have suited me,
A riper rival I deserve. Reclaim
From me this game of chaff and dust, for pranks
And impish play suit not an aged one.
This Adam's son is just a heap of hay,
2700 Whom my one spark can all consume. If Thy
World had but straw why didst Thou light a lake
Of fire in me. Thou dost confront with glass
The one who could e'en mountains melt. Now for
The piling torture of these victories
2705 I claim to be requited. Lead my way
That I may find a man of God, who dare
Resist my might, and who will twist and turn
My neck, whose single glance will make my flesh
To creep, and who will say to me "Begone,"
2710 Who will not weigh me by two oats. O God!
Confront me with a single faithful man,
May I perchance gain bliss in my defeat!

THE FIRMAMENT OF SATURN

THE CONDEMNED SPIRITS OF THOSE WHO WERE TREACHEROUS TO THEIR NATION AND WHOM HELL REFUSED TO ACCEPT

THE sage of Rum, the guide of all the true
Who knows their stages said, "Thou who exertest
Thyself in heaven strenuously, dost not 2715
Thou see the world that from a star did steal
Its trail to wear the idolator's thread
Around its waist? It moves so lazily
That it appears to pause, its aura turns
Each goodness base. Though of mere matter formed 2720
Its earth will suffer not being trodden on.
A hundred thousand angels who right since
Eternity hold thunder in their hands
And so dispense the wrath of God, do whip
This planet to unrip its pivot off. 2725
This world abominated and abhorred,
Whose morn the niggard sun benights, contains
The spirits that of resurrection stand
Deprived, whom hell disdained to burn. Of them
There are two evil ones who for their flesh 2730
All stifled a nation's soul. They are a shame
To fatherland, to faith, to all mankind.

From Deccan Sadiq, Ja'far from Bengal,[1]
Ungratified and unaccepted souls,
2735 Sunk in despair, since they a chaos cast
Into a people's life. A people, who
Delivered other nations, find their faith
And fatherland debased. Dost thou not know
That Ind, the darling of all feeling souls,
2740 Whose beams were once spread far and wide, in dust
And blood still rolls. Who in her clay the seed
Of slavery sowed save these two evil ones?
We for a while shall fly in azure space
To see the retribution meted out."

The Sea of Blood

2745 Description stands defied by what I saw,
With dread the flesh was sundered from the soul.
I stood confronted with a fearful sea
Of blood whose waves and currents lashed and scourged,
Whose breakers splashed. And while its waters teemed
2750 With crocodiles, the air did seethe with snakes
Of day-white wings and shags, and night-black mouths,
Its tides were savage panthers with whose dread
The sharks lay dead upon the coast. The sea

1. Two Indian generals whom the English gold persuaded to play traitors to their country.

In frowning fury breathless rushed and roared
In which its flinty coast sent crumbling rocks; 2755
And on its waves a barge but rose and fell.
Two pallid men within that canoe crouched
With tattered bodies and dishevelled hair.

THE SPIRIT OF INDIA APPEARS

The sky was rent and all at once I saw
A noble hourie soft unveil her face. 2760
Eternity beamed from her brow, her eyes
Did sparkle with the wine of endless bliss.
She wore a raiment lighter than the clouds,
Its threads, the veins that through rose-petals run.
Despite her beauty she was bound in chains 2765
And gyves, sad sighs alone escaped her lips.
And Rumi said, "This is the soul of Ind,
Whose heavy plaints have sorrowed many hearts."

THE WAIL OF THE SOUL OF INDIA

The lamp of life in India's chandelier
Is quenched. My denizens are unconcerned 2770
With my fair name or their own secret self.
Their plectrum doth not strike their sleeping lyre,
They fix their gaze upon their past and would
Fain warm their hearts with but its ashes gray.

2775 If I am fettered 'tis because of them,
For them the wails that can avail me nought.
Adrift they cut themselves from the ego's life,
And chained themselves in ancient usages.
They are a sight that grieves humanity,
2780 Their values are a torment for this age.

Avoid the *faqr* that teaches nakedness,
Take to the one that makes thee reign supreme.
Both patience and oppression I denounce,
For tyranny is equal poison for
2785 Him who perpetrates or who suffers it.
The former always learns to tyrannise
The other doth submit perpetually.
Both long for pain increasingly and I
Can but repeat, "O that my people knew."

2790 How can glad dawn break out of India's night?
Though Ja'far died, his spirit still survives;
When from one form it finds itself expelled,
It makes another its abode. At times
Conspires it with the church, and then at times
2795 It serves the Brahmin full devotedly:
It must strike bargains where it can. Although

As Haydar garbed it is but 'Antarah.[1]
Its loyalties it varies as the world
Doth shift and change. In olden days it swore
To other gods its fealty, but it makes 2800
Obeisance now to fatherland. Lament
It may for faith, around its core it wears
The idolator's thread. Whate'er its guise,
It strangulates a people. Smiling though
It may appear, it doth befriend no one, 2805
And like a grinning snake remains a snake.
It cuts a nation into twain. Disgraced
A people are that give it birth. Whene'er
A nation is despoiled, the cause must be
A Ja'far or Sadiq. I seek refuge 2810
From Ja'far's spirit, I abominate
The many Ja'fars that besmear this age.

THE LAMENT OF ONE OF THE OCCUPANTS OF THE BARGE

"We are rejected by both life and death,
Alas! the scorn that they both show. We crossed
The world of East and West, till finally, 2815
In mounting pain, we reached the gates of Hell.
But it disdained to spare a single spark

1. A fearless warrior and wrestler of Arabia; here stands for *evil*.

For us, or e'en its ashes cold to hurl
Upon our head, and said, 'I'd rather have
2820 Mere dust and dross to burn, but will not let
These infidels contaminate my flame.'

"We went beyond nine firmaments, in search
Of sudden death, which said, 'The mystery
Of life I hold; my task is to preserve
2825 The soul, the flesh alone I do bereave.
An ugly soul may not be worth two oats,
I can have naught to do with it. Begone
Ye who would fain released be from your souls,
For perfidy can find no balm in death.'

2830 "O violent winds! O sea of blood! O earth,
O azure sky! O stars! O sun and moon!
O Tablet Safe! O Pen Divine! O Book!
O idols white! O Lords of West who hold
A world in palm without recourse to war.
2835 This world has no beginning and no end,
Where can be found a god for treacherous men?"

All suddenly boomed forth a sound that cracked
The breast of the ocean and the wilderness

The world of matter lost its form and shape,
Hills crumbled into segments loose. Like clouds 2840
The mountains trailed in space. All moulds were rent,
The world was crashed without the doomsday blast.
Both thunder, lightning seemed to take refuge
Inside the sea of blood. The billows surged
And swelled, engulfing all the hill and dale. 2845
Whate'er befell all creatures, seen, unseen,
The listless stars beheld and sailed away.

BEYOND THE FIRMAMENTS

THE PLACE OF NIETZSCHE

ALL everywhere the war of nothingness
And life doth rage; the secrets of this sky
2850 None knows. All everywhere death heralds life;
How happy is the man who understands
What death involves. All everywere life's cheap
As air; and, though ephemeral, it longs
For immortality. A hundred worlds
2855 My eyes traversed until there came to sight
The borders of this universe. Each world
Had its own moons and galaxies; each world
Did order life in its own way. Time flowed
Quite like a stream: here slow, there swift; a year
2860 Became a month here and a moment there;
The more of this world was the less of that.
Our reason, proud and so resourceful here,
In other worlds, was abject, reprobate.

On one end of this world of how and why
2865 There lived a man whose voice was tragedy.
His eyes were sharper than e'en hawk's, his face
Was radiant with the fire that in his breast
Glowed ceaselessly. And he oft sang this verse:

"Neither for Gabriel nor paradise
Nor heaven's damsels nor for God I cry: 2870
I crave a mould of dust that is consumed
By a yearning soul." "Who is this frenzied man?"
I asked. And Rumi said, "The German seer
Is he, who lives betwixt two worlds. His flute
Contains an ancient melody. Nor chains 2875
Nor cross did come his way; yet he too gave
The antique message that once Hallaj brought.
His speech is bold. his thought sublime, his words
Have like a sword cut up the West in twain
His coevals his emotion could not track; 2880
And thought him mad whom ecstasy possessed
The men bewitched by wisdom and deprived
Of rapture, brought physicians to restore
Him from his malady. Save guile, save craft,
What could the doctors ever have? Alas! 2885
For an enraptured being who in the West
Is born. Avicenna doth merely bind
His heart to musty tomes; and he prescribes
But sleeping pills or he may open up
A vein A Hallaj, lonely in his town, 2890
Whose life, the Mullahs spared, physicians claimed.

"None was there in the West who concord knew
And so his music broke his harp. None showed
The wanderer his way; so chaos grew
2895 In his experience. A coin of gold
He was, which none could then evaluate,
Him none could utilise. A lover was
Enwrapped in his own sighs, a traveller
Thus lost his path. His wine all beakers broke,
2900 He snapped himself from God, and so was torn
From self. He yearned to see, with naked eyes,
The spectacle of power fused with love.
He longed that from this dust and dross may grow
The wine that, from the human heart alone,
2905 Doth suffer to outsprout. The rank he sought
Belongs to God, a stage beyond the ken
Of intellect. All life explains the signs
Of self, whose stages are the 'no' and 'but,'
He lingered at the point of 'no' and failed
2910 To gain the stage of 'but'; nor realised
The rank and reach too of 'His worshipper.'
A light illumined him, yet unaware
He was of it, as of the roots remains
The fruit. His eyes but sought the sight of man,
2915 He shouted boldly, 'Where is he?' for of

The earthly men he had despaired, and searched
For vision, as did Moses. How I wish
That he had lived in Ahmad's[1] day, for then
A consummation he could have attained.
His intellect is grappling with itself; 2920
Thou take thy way, thy way is good for thee.
Proceed, for presently that place will come,
Where speech can flow without the help of words."

Towards the Garden of Paradise

I crossed the frontiers of this universe,
And placed my feet upon a world uncramped 2925
By sides, unriddled by the days and nights,
Untrammelled by both right and left. My lamp
Of comprehension paled and, with the awe
Of meaning, my word died. To talk of soul,
In earthly tongues, is hard as though one sought
To sour in space while fast bound in a cage. 2930

With but a glimpse of the world of the heart
Gain'st vision thou. What is the heart? A world
With neither tint nor smell, unwalled by sides,
And by intuitions filled; it seems to stay, 2935

1. Shaykh Ahmad Sarhandi, a great saint and mystic

But ever on the move remains. From fact
To fact doth reason tread its way; the heart
But courses on unmarkèd paths. Each one
Of myriad thoughts that multitude the brain
2940 Is separate: one can ascend the sky,
But, by its side, another merely limps,
And so its reach is curbed. Whereas, the air
That's wafted from love's casement leads the heart
Quite swiftly to his blissful sight. Thy eyes
2945 May wake or sleep, the heart can see without
Assistance of the sun. This new world was
The panorama of the heart; what shall
I say of that which cannot be surmised?
Born of a different bidding from the Lord
2950 This world knows no decay; in e'er new shapes
It shimmers: every while the eyes behold,
The mind but fails to grasp. Each moment sees
Its beauty and perfection fast assume
New forms. And undetermined are its days
2955 By sun or moon; in its vast space do rove
Nine firmaments. Whatever is unseen
Comes into view before a wish for it
Grows in the heart. In words, how can I paint
This world? A world compact of life and light

And presence of the love. Upon the hills 2960
Its tulips find repose, and many streams
Do gambol in its gardens sweet; its buds
Bloom, with the breath of angels, into red
Or purple, white or green. Like silver too
Its waters glisten under musky airs. 2965
Emerald domes adorn its palaces,
And in its ruby tents with golden ropes
Glide beauteous figures whose complexions shine
Like glass. But Rumi said, "O thou art caught
In thy imagination, pass beyond 2970
Thy senses, trust them not. The light of mind
Governs all actions, good or bad, and shapes
Both hell and paradise. The palaces
Thou seest are made of neither brick nor stone;
They're built of deeds. What thou callest nymph and wine 2975
Reflect a world of bliss and zeal. And life
Is naught here save the sight immaculate
Or its desire, and converse with the Love."

The Palace of Sharfunnisa

I said, "This mansion built of diamonds
Which from the sun a tribute claims; a place 2980
It is so lofty that the houries make

A pilgrimage to it; thou who inspired
This search perennial, tell me who owns
This palace bright." He made reply, "Here dwells
2985 Sharfunnisa, and on its roof the birds
In chorus with the angels sing. Like her
Our sea produced no pearl, no mother milked
A daughter who could be her parallel.
Her grave doth make the dust of Lahore vie
2990 With heavens high. Her secret no one knew.
The child of Abdus Samad, Governor
Of Punjab, who embodied in herself
Desire and holy longing, heavenly pain;
Of her austerity, the impress will
2995 Unblurred eternally remain. To purge
And cleanse and sanctify her soul, she spared
No moment from the reading of Qur'an;
A double-edged sword hung e'er by her side,
The holy Book in hand, presented she
3000 A spectacle of flesh and soul and sense
All consecrate to God; her life was formed
Of book and prayer and sword and solitude;
How blest a life in sole devotion spent.
And as death came, she cast a wistful glance
3005 And to her mother said, 'If thou mayest know

My secret, then this Qur'an and this sword
Behold. Conjoined these two powers are;
Protectors mutual, they constitute
The pivot of the universe of life.
In this e'er-sinking world, thy daughter knew 3010
No other friend than these. Now that I take
Thy leave, I have a word to say to thee:
None may remove the Qur'an and the sword
From me, and let undecked remain my tomb
With dome or lamp; and this my parting word 3015
To thy heart take. Content the faithful are
With but these two, let them suffice to form
The decoration of my sepulchre.'
For ages did the Qur'an and the sword
Lie on her grave which, in this transient world, 3020
Conveyed life's message to the men of truth.
Till Mussalmans undid themselves and time
Put off their game. The man of God began
To be afraid of others than the Lord;
A jackal did the lion become. The stir 3025
Of quicksilver forsook his heart. Thou knowest
What to the Punjab happened; in that land
Decline set in among the Mussalmans,
Snatched was the rapier and the book by Sikhs."

MEETING THE GREAT SAINT HAZRAT SYED ALI HAMADANI AND MULLA TAHIR GHANI OF KASHMIR

3030 These words enflamed my breast, and agonised
Me for Punjab, that chosen land. Old pangs,
The griefs of fellow-men, returned to me,
And so in heaven too I felt myself
On fire. Till from the Kauthar's[1] banks arose
3035 A loud and tragic song: "Of straw I searched
A handful just to burn myself; the rose
Suspected I shall build with it my nest."

Said Rumi, "Look at that which meets thine eye;
My child, engrossed be not with what has passed.
3040 'Tis Ghani's voice that thou dost hear, whose song
With fervour glows: the foison of his self
Is for him sole-sufficing joy. His lips
Pour ecstasy before that Syed great,
The Orient's leader and the architect
3045 Of nations' destinies, from whose tribe 'twas
That e'en Ghazali did derive his thought,
And learnt the lesson of "The Lord is He";

1 A stream in the paradise

By sovereigns and by hermits his advice
Was treasured equally. He is the guide
Of that edenic land, to which this king, 3050
Possessing oceans in his sleeve, did give
A largesse great: art, knowledge, culture, faith.
And thus created he a small Iran,
A home of arts, of rich, enchanting crafts.
His single glance unravels many knots, 3055
Arise, and let its arrow pierce thy heart."

In the Presence of Shah-i-Hamadan

Living Stream

Of the Lord's secret I do seek the clue:
Submission He demands from us and yet
Makes Satan live; embellishes the bad
So gorgeously and yet insists upon 3060
The righteous deed. What gamble and what game
Is it, I ask, why are these toils all laid?
A lump of dust against the whirling sky
Is placed; tell me, did it behove the Lord
To have done so? What can we think or do 3065
Except to gnash our teeth and wring our hands!

Shah-i-Hamadan

The one who comes to comprehend himself
Can forge a profit from his loss. A load
Of sorrow Satan's company doth bring
3070 To man, but glory 'tis to war with him.
So strike thy self against the Ahriman,
Thou art the sword, he is the whetting stone;
Make keen thy edge, let deadly be thy blow,
Else thou wilt bear an all-benighted fate.

Living Stream

3075 Beneath the heavens, man devours man,
And nations fatten on each other. Like
The seed of rue cast into fire, my soul
Is scorched and loud lament doth issue forth
From my sad heart for children of the vale.[1]
3080 Possessed of bright and penetrating minds,
A people, finely formed; a sign of God
The delicacy of whose skill provides,
Their chalice yet is floating in their blood;
I sing my dirge for them. Unpaid has been
3085 To them their share of self-assertive life,
Which makes them mere outcasts in their own land;

1 Kashmir

And strangers lead their workmen by the hands,
And on the very fish inside their streams
They sling their stones. The convoys of the world
Keep marching to their various goals; but still 3090
This people's life continues as before:
All baulked and thwarted and in disarray.
With servitude, their aspirations died;
The flame, that in the arteries of their vines
Would run, is quenched. But lest thou think perchance 3095
That they were always so, that they kowtowed
To others always, know that they too were
Once intrepid and valiant and brave;
They too could pierce the lines of their foe's hordes.

Look at the vale, look at her snowy hills, 3100
Look at the burning hands that her chinars
Thrust out. Her vernal seasons bring a wave,
A leaping flood of colour; from her stones
Drop diamonds. Like dancing cotton thrashed
Appear the fragments of her dainty clouds. 3105
The hill, the river and the sunset—there
I saw the face of God unveiled. One morn
In the Nishat,[1] I wandered with the breeze

1. A famous garden in Srinagar

And sang, "O listen to the flute"; a bird,
3110 Perched on her bough, addressed me thus: "This spring
Is not a penny worth: for aeons have
The poppy and the wild-eyed narcissus
Bloomed and the wind of Nauroz torn their cloaks;
For aeons have the daisies in this dale
3115 Than moonbeams purer been; for aeons has
The rose now opened and now shut her buds,
But never did our barren earth produce
Once even, a Shahab-ud-Din[1] again."

The requiem sung by this morning bird
3120 Gave to my soul a fever new. And soon
I saw a man in frenzy lost whose wail
And agitation robbed me of my poise.

"Seek not from us the song
All rapturous, bypass,
3125 Mere charm of tint and smell
Are roses and green grass.

"'Tis not the dew that drips
Down from the tulip's leaves,
But tears that flow in streams
3130 From the eye of one who grieves.

1. The most benevolent king in the generally sad history of Kashmir.

"This music could not flow
From feathers mere and wings,
But of the dead desires
'Tis Ghani's soul that sings.

"O breeze! if thou dost pass 3135
By Geneva sometime,
To League of Nations take
This sad and gloomy rhyme.

"Each rill, each garden, field,
Each farmer too they sold, 3140
A nation for a price
That makes my blood ice-cold."

Shah-i-Hamadan

A subtle point I shall reveal to thee,
My child: thy body is mere clay, thy soul
A priceless pearl; so for the spirit's sake 3145
Let melted be the flesh, let winnowed be
The holy grain from chaff. If thou shouldst tear
A slice from off thy body, never will
It be restored; but give away the soul
That's drenched in vision, and it shall return 3150
To thee again. Though bound, yet always free,
The soul's quintessence matchless is. If thou

Shouldst try to hoard it, disappear it will
Inside the body's vault; but scatter it
3155 And it will vitalise society's growth.
What is the soul in vision drenched, O man
So courageous? What means to give it off?
To give the soul away's to transfer it
To God, to melt the mountains with its fire.
3160 To be in vision drenched? It doth connote
To find thy self, to shine like stars at night.
To fail to find the self is naught to be,
To find it is but to bestow one's self
On self. Whoever fixed his gaze on it
3165 And on naught else, he broke his prison bars.
The sight-intoxicated man who views
His self regards the bite as better than
The healing balm. Like free abundant air
Appears to him the soul; before his eyes
3170 The gaol-walls tremble; and the granite's breast
His axe doth cleave. For from the universe
He claims his share. When he transcends his life,
Eternally doth it remain with him;
Or, else, it would be but a moment's guest.

Living Stream

Of good and evil, the philosophy 3175
Thou hast explained, O wisest sage; thou wert
The guide of truth-perceivers e'en, aware
Of kinghood's secrets all; another point
I seek to know from thee: we, humble men,
From us the ruler claims tribute; what gives 3180
The crown and throne its sanction and its base?

Shah-i-Hamadan

How doth authority originate
In East and West? From war or people's will.
I plainly tell thee, thou of lofty rank,
Forbidden is to give tribute except 3185
To two: your governor who must be one
Of you, whose ground and argument must be
The word of God; or it should be the man
Who comes like hurricanes, who cities sweeps
And, then, doth battle with himself In war, 3190
His might doth open up the world; in peace,
His love-like ways. Thou canst purchase Iran
And Ind, but kinghood ne'er, for Jamshyd's cup
Cannot be bought from marts Shouldst thou attempt
Obtain it there, thou wilt obtain mere glass, 3195

Whose property is constantly to break.

Ghani

Who gave to Ind desire of liberty?
Who taught the prey to hunt? They were those sons
Of Brahmins, with alive and vibrant hearts,
3200 Whose faces put the tulip and the rose
To shame. Mature at work and diligent
And keen of eye. their very glance commoves
The West. Their origin is this our soil,
Our catching earth; in Kashmir's sky, these stars
3205 Arose. Shouldst thou think that our dust contains
Not e'en a single spark, inside thyself
Look thou awhile. Whence all this fire thou hast?
Whence came this breath of spring? Tis from the wind
That lends our hills their fragrance and their hue.

3210 Thou dost not know that, on a day, a wave
Said to another in the Wullar, "How,
How long each other should we strike? Arise
And beat against the shore. That child of ours,
That river old, has flung in hill and dale
3215 Its clamour and its roar; it smites the rocks
Upon its path till it destroys the base

Of mountains e'en. To towns and wilds it took,
And sucked its milk from hundred breasts; its awe
Like doomsday is to earthly men. It rose
From us and nowhere else. 'Tis certain sin 3220
To be confined to the constricting coast,
This bank, that's but a stone upon our way.
Both morn and eve in it we may play, but
If we resign to it, 'tis lasting death.
Life is to over-surge the down and dale, 3225
How fortunate's the wave that leapt the shore!"

O thou that, on life's forehead, readst the lines,
That gav'st a tumult to the Orient;
Thou hast a sigh that smoulders in the heart.
A turbulence that makes us restless all. 3230
From thee the birds of gardens learnt to choir
Their hymns, the grass ablutions doth perform
With tears that flow from thee, thy mind has been
A field of roses; from thy hope has grown
The hope of many souls; O thou whose call 3235
Is like a bell to caravans, why art
Thou in despair about the Valley's sons?
Their hearts are not dead in their breasts, beneath
Their snows are embers live. Wait till thou see

3240 Without the clarion calling, will there rise
A people who will mutiny and leave
Their graves. Grieve not, O thou perceptive soul;
Give out a sigh that burns both sea and land.
For many human habitations have,
3245 Beneath this azure sky, been set ablaze
By fire that seethes in a dervish's heart.
Empire is bubble-frail and with a breath
Canst thou destroy it. Nations' destinies
Have been giv'n shape by song, for song can build
3250 And undermine as well. Thy lancet may
Have pierced the hearts of men, but what thou art
None knows. From poetry's key alone derives
Thy music, but thy words exceed its scale.
Bring forth a melody entrancing, bold,
3255 And let new madness rage in paradise.

Living Stream

The wine of dervishism
Drink deep till thou art grown
Full ripe that thou mayest strike
And claim old Jamshyd's throne.

3260 "Does not this world of ours
Suit thee?" He asked one day,

I said, "It never did,"
"Then break it up we say!"

In vain in every inn
I searched a foe with might; 3265
All wine-boys do forsake,
Pray now with Rustum fight.

Thine is a lonely blaze
O tulip of the waste,
To share thy glowing heart 3270
To man thou need to haste.

Thou art its flaming heart
Thy veins its warmth enfold,
A test thou needest? Do tear
The breast of the world, behold! 3275

If reason be thy guide
Throw it from self away,
Drink from the cup of love
With men who know the way.

These scarlet tears of mine 3280
Out of my heart are born,
Pick up these rubies bright
Thy ring with them adorn.

MEETING WITH THE INDIAN POET BARTARI HARI

The houries in their palaces and tents
3285 My song did beckon, to participate
In all-consuming fire. One heard and looked
From out her window and another put
Her head out of her tent. I gave to each,
In everlasting paradise, a share,
3290 A measure of the sorrow and the pain
Of the earth. A smile subdued played on the lips
Of my blest guide. He said, "O sorcerer
That wert in India born, now meet that bard
Of thy own land; his eyes can into pearls
3295 Turn drops of dew. His name is Bartari.
His nature's like an April-cloud; he from
The garden plucks the comliest buds alone;
Thy melody has led him now to us;
With priceless song, he is a king who holds,
3300 In the world of asceticism as well,
A place all eminent; with thought unique
He weaves a fabric fine; a world of truth
Lies hidden in his words. He doth know well
Life's workshop and its din· a Jamshyd's he,
3305 Whose poetry is his glass." We soon stood up
In reverence for him till he reached us.

Living Stream

O thou who uttered heart-preserving truths,
That gave discernment to the East, say whence
Songs get their fire, from Ego or from God?

Bartari Hari

The poet's centre in this world remains 3310
Unreachable; his note is implicit
In melody, in music's high and low.
The heart in him that hotly quests doth not
Before God even find repose. To search
Unceasingly is our sole bliss, desire 3315
To poetry lends its silent, quiv'ring fire.
O thou that drinkest juice of poesy's grapes,
If thou shouldst e'er attain this rank, know then
That, from the world of brick and stone, a verse
Entraps the hearts of nymphs of paradise. 3320

Living Stream

I see all India restless; it is time
That thou reveal the secret truth divine

Bartari Hari

Above the man-made gods
That yield no single ray

3325 A High One lives, who far
From temples keeps away.

All sapless are thy prayers
Bereft of action's fire,
For actions, good or bad,
3330 Do shape this life entire.

In one verse I bestow
A knowledge none doth keep,
And happy is the one,
On the heart who carves it deep:

3335 The world thou seest is not
The handicraft of the Lord,
From thee alone emerge
The spinning wheel, the cord.

Before the law of actions
3340 Bow, from the rest be free,
They are thy deed's reflections
Hell, heaven, purgatory.

Movement towards the Palaces of the Kings of the East—Nadir, Abdali and the Martyred King

The voice of Bartari did soak my depths;
I was absorbed in it, when Rumi said,

"The eye of mind should be awake; release 3345
Thyself from coils of thought. Thou visited
The company of dervishes; now see
The mansions of the kings as well. Here dwell
The monarchs of the Orient, the pride
Of Deccan, Iran and Afghanistan. 3350
The one is Nadir who the secret knew
Of unity, who taught the Mussalmans
Fraternity. Then Abdali is there,
Whose personality did blazon forth
A sign of God, who to the Afghans gave 3355
The basis of their nationhood. The third
Is chief of all love's martyrs and their lord,
To India, China, Turkey, Syria who
Their glory gives. Resplendent is his name
And brighter than the sun; his tomb's dust lives 3360
More than myself or thou. A hidden thing
Was love, which, in the open wilds, he showed
To all; for like a lover did he give
His life. The victor of Hunayn and Badr[1]
Gave to this king the wealthful heritage 3365
Of Husayn's ardency. Though he has left
This inn of seven days, yet to this time

1. Two of the battles in which the Prophet himself led the faithful.

In Deccan doth his trumpet still blow forth."

Uncultivated are my words and tunes
3370 And thoughts to tell the story of that place.
Its sight gave to the heavenly angels all
Their wisdom and their speech; it lent to them
Their vision and their life. The palace had
Its walls and doors of jade; the azure sky
3375 Seemed lost in them. Its grandeur, above
All 'how' and 'why' made reason reprobate
Its blossom-laden boughs, its hyacinths,
Its roses and its cypresses appeared
As paintings of blithe spring—so delicate
3380 Were they. The flower petals and the leaves
Of trees acquired continual colours new
From urge of self-expression; magic was
There in the breeze which yellow turned to red
Before the eye could wink; on every side
3385 The fountains sprayed their pearls and heaven's birds
Sang anthems constantly. A room there was
Within this mansion tall, whose dust appeared
To hold the sun in hand. Of rose quartz made
Its pillars and its ceilings and its walls,
3390 Its floor was sapphire and aquamarine

Enclosed it on all sides. To right and left
Stood houries in a row with silver belts;
And, in the middle, on a throne of gold
Sat stately sovereigns. With the utmost love,
Did Rumi, that refinement incarnate, 3395
Address them: "This is a man from East,
A poet or a sorcerer; his thought
Is sharp, his soul is full of pangs, his words
Have given a burning to the Orient."

Nadir

Come thou, philosopher of East, O thou 3400
Whose lips the Darian tongue befits. We are
Thy trusty friends, tell us what thou mayest know
Of Iran and reveal thy secret all

Living Stream

Long ages after did she ope her eyes
To self, but was soon snared. And smitten now 3405
She lies by blandishments of idols gay
She who created culture, imitates
The West! A slave of fatherland and race,
She Shapur now acclaims and pours contempt
On Arabs and their heritage. Devoid 3410
Of new vitalities, she looks for life

In ancient graves. She did forget her soul
When she got linked to fatherland. She now
Remembers Haydar not, her heart doth dwell
3415 In Rustum's memory. Her history
From Europe she now learns, an image false.

Writ large in Yazd Jard's age was decadence
When Iran's face lacked lustre and her blood
Ran cold. Effete were then her laws, her faith,
3420 And sicklied both her morn and eve. No wine
Would bubble in her glass; no embers lay
Beneath her dust, till from the desert came
A mighty resurrection unto her.
Such resurrections are a grace of God
3425 —See, she doth outlive Rome—except by them
The dead can never hope to leave their graves.
The men from desert gave to Persia
Her soul, and then returned they to their waste.
They washed off from our tablet all that's old;
3430 They brought with them the fruit and foliage
Of a new age and then they went away.
Alas! unmindful of Arabia's gift,
Should Persia melt herself with Europe's fire.

ENTER THE SPIRIT OF NASIR KHUSRO ALVI WHO SINGS THIS SONG IN ECSTASY AND DISAPPEARS

If thou hast let the sword or pen
Be of thy hand the rider fair, 3435
Then if thy body's steed be lame
Or it be nimble—have no care.

As flames leap from a stack of wood
And from the flames emerges light,
So art flows from the point of pen 3440
Or the sharp edge of steel full bright.

Nor quill nor sword can art produce
When handled by mere faithless men,
And no intrinsic worth remains
Devoid of faith in sword or pen. 3445

Faith's worth is known but to the wise,
The foolish bring to it disgrace,
Much like the cows who will discard
The jasmin flowers as too base.

Faith's like the cloth, of the one half 3450
Of which an Elia's shirt be made,
And of the other half of it
A shroud in which a heathen's laid.

Abdali

The youth who founded divers empires great,
3455 And then retired to his cave in the hills
And blazed a fire; did he emerge from it
As tempered steel or was he burnt away?

Living Stream

While nations with each other join their hands,
He is engaged in fratricidal war.
3460 *His life is all East's life; his child of ten*
Can lead a host of troops; yet ignorant
He is of self and wholly unaware
Of his potentialities. He has
A heart, yet knows it not; fiom flesh is flesh
3465 Divorced and heart from heart. He cannot find
His goal, for purpose never has inspired
His soul. The poet who the Afghans knew,[1]
Who uttered fearlessly what he beheld,
Their doctor who could physic all their ills,
3470 He saw a people's secret, ventured forth
To tell the hidden truth in dauntless words:
"Suppose an Afghan find a camel geared
With saddle rich and trim and heaps of pearls,

1 Khushal Khan Khatak, a famous Afghan poet.

His lowly courage will find greater joy
Not in the pearls but in the twinkling bell." 3475

Abdali

It is the heart that to our natures gives
An urge, a motion and a restlessness.
The flesh is made to wake or sleep by it,
When it doth die, the body is transformed
And sweat is turned to blood. Naught is the flesh 3480
In case the heart's diseased, so concentrate
Thy gaze on it alone. A mould of clay
Is Asia with the Afghans as her heart.
Their weal, their woe, is Asia's weal and woe;
So long the heart be free, the flesh is free, 3485
Or else it is a straw placed in wind's path.
The heart too has its law quite like the flesh
For hatred deadens it while faith restores.
The strength of faith doth come from unity;
And unity when 'tis externalised 3490
Is in a nation's shape made manifest.

By imitation of the West, the East
Has lost her moorings, she should have possessed
A keener sight, have analysed the cause
Of Europe's dominance, whose might arose 3495

From neither flute nor harp nor from the dance
Of half-nude girls nor from the spell that's wov'n
By magic of the faces tulip-hued;
Nor ankles bare nor half-cut hair did give
3500 It strength, nor atheism, nor Latin script.
From art and science doth the West derive
Her power which is the only kindling flame
That lights her lamp. For learning ne'er arose
From cut of dress, nor hampered can it be
3505 By turbans huge. O gay and saucy youth!
What knowledge needs is brain, not western dress;
It needs the sight, it doth not need the cap.
A bold imagination should suffice
For it and so should a discerning mind.

3510 Whoever burns the midnight oil can art
And knowledge gain. With ceaseless efforts thou
Canst claim this country large, whose borderline
None dares to mark. The Turk, torn from the self,
Enravished by the West, drinks from her hand
3515 A poison sweet; and since the antidote
He has renounced, what can I say except
That God save him. The wish for self-display
Makes Europe's slave but borrow from her tunes

And dance; he barters for mere games his cash
Of sterling self. For strenuous is the search 3520
Of science which his sloth can but forswear;
His nature loves the facile and the smooth.
If one, in this old temple, seeks mere ease,
It signifies departure of the soul

Living Stream

Thou knowest the civilisation of the West; 3525
A paradise of colour is its world,
But with its glare the homes of men are scorched;
Their boughs, their leaves, their nests are burnt away.
Though its exterior dazzles and allures,
Its heart is yet decrepit, led by eyes. 3530
The eye doth see, the heart doth reel within,
And bend and kneel before this idol-house.
The Orient's destiny none knows: what will
Cure the ones with hearts to the exterior bound?

Abdali

'Tis Pehlavi and Nadir with their will 3535
And prudence, who can regulate her fate.
For Pehlavi, the heir of Qubad's throne,
Has straightened Persia's muddled task The wealth
Of Durranis is Nadir who has shaped

3540 The Afghans sound. For faith and country grieved,
His armies rend and burst the mountains now.
Commander, soldier, general and withal
He's strong as steel for foes and soft as silk
For friends. I give my heart to him who knows
3545 His self and understands the modern age.
The West knows sorcery: 'tis faithlessness
To place one's trust in aught except one's self.

The Martyred King

Tell me of India, with whose blades of grass
E'en gardens cannot match. Tell me of her,
3550 Dead is the passion in whose mosques and quenched
Whose temples' fire. I gave my blood for her,
I nursed her image in my memory,
From my grief canst thou guess her grief; alas !
For the beloved who forgot her love.

Living Stream

3555 The people of this land defy the law
The West has giv'n to them; they spurn its charms.
A burden on the soul is alien law
A sorrow e'en though it be heaven-sent.

The Martyred King

As man grows from a mould of dust, he grows
With longing in his heart. To savour sin 3560
Is his desire, to taste its raptures sweet.
He searches for his ego; save with sin,
The ego but eludes one's grasp; until
Access be gained to it, frustration lies
In store for man. A pilgrim to my town 3565
And country thou hast been, hast sooth'd thy eyes
There on my grave; thou know the universe,
In Deccan didst thou see a sign of life?

Living Stream

I sowed my tears in Deccan; from its dust
Grew tulips red. The ceaseless Cavery 3570
Doth show a flood, a torrent in her soul.

The Martyred King

O thou endowed with the heart-brightening word,
I feel the fever of thy tears in me.
Those who the secret know, with their slow nails
They gash the veins of harps till they release 3575
A stream of blood from them. The melody
That gushes from thy soul has given to hearts

Their silent fire. In presence of "the Chief
Of All"[1] I was one day, without whose help
3580 No destination ever can be reached.
Though, in that presence, utterance is barred,
For there the soul remains absorbed in sight,
I yet kept burning with thy fervent song,
And gave vent to thy thought. He asked, "This verse
3585 Which you recite, who wrote it? In it runs
The riot of life." Now, with thy ardency
That harmonises with the soul, convey
A word or two from me to Cavery.
Thou art a living stream, she too the same,
3590 Let melody then flow with melody.

THE MESSAGE OF THE MARTYRED KING TO RIVER CAVERY (REALITY OF LIFE AND DEATH AND MARTYRDOM)

O Cavery, flow softly for a while,
Maybe thy constant wandering has tired
Thyself. For ages hast thou wept among
The mountains; with thy eyelashes hast carved
3595 Thy way. O thou far dearer to me
Than the Oxus or the Euphrates, thy flow
Is nectar for the Deccan's earth. Alas !

1 The holy Prophet.

For that town that lay in thy lap, whose looks
Were beauteous and were on thy honey fed.
Thou hast seen years, but still thy youth remains 3600
Unaging as before; thy surge, thy gush,
Thy swell, thy bloom remain the same. Thy wave
Has yielded naught but pearls; thy tresses flow:
May they keep dancing till eternity.
O thou, whose symphony doth light the fire 3605
Of life, dost know who has this message sent?
It is the message of the one around
Whose grandeur thou revolved, whose opulence
Thou mirrored once; the one who turned the wastes
To paradise; the one who with his blood 3610
His image wrought. His dust remains a shrine
For hundred longings; and his blood doth give
Its fever to thy wave. His speech was naught
Save deed; he woke while yet the East did sleep.

Waves of life's river are both thou and I; 3615
In every breath the universe doth shift.
And life doth change, since it a new world seeks.
This flux is but the warp and woof of life,
The urge of self-expression emanates
From it alone. A thing appears to stay, 3620

But still a secret motion goads it on,
And paths keep marching like the travellers.
The caravan, the camel and the sands,
The desert palms—whate'er thou seest doth cry
3625 With movement's pain. And in the garden too,
A rose is but a moment's guest; its hue,
A breath in all. The blossoms in its lap,
The hearse of flowers on its shoulders borne:
And that is spring; carousing fast combined
3630 With condolence. I to the tulip said,
"Pray blaze again." He said, "Thou knowest not
Our secret yet; existence, built of straw,
Has unfulfilment as its sole reward."

Seek'st thou from non-existence to emerge?
3635 Hast thou come into this ephemeral inn?
Thou shouldst not have. However, since thou hast,
Fly not like spark from self, but busy be
In searching for a stack to flame. And if
Thou hast the heat and brilliance of the sun,
3640 Then let the sky's immensity be thine:
Burn thou the birds and gardens, wastes and hills,
The very fish that lie in beds of streams.
If worthy of an arrow be thy breast,

Like eagles, then, should be thy life, thy death.
Eternity is in the breadth of life, 3645
I do not seek its length. What is its law
And principle? The tiger's single breath
Is better than the sheep's full century.

Life's fortified by glad submission; while
Death is a mirage and a magic-show. 3650
The man of God's a lion, and death
A deer, a helpless fawn. It is one stage
Out of the many he doth cross; he swoops
On it as eagles pounce on doves. The slave
Dies every moment with the fear of death, 3655
And life is a forbidden fruit to him.
But glory doth attend the free, to whom
Death gives a soul anew. They fear the self;
They fear not death, because it is to them
An instant mere. Reject the death that lands 3660
Thee in thy grave; for 'tis the death of beasts.
The man of faith seeks from his God the death
That should upraise him from the earth; the death
That is the goal of love. This other death
Is always like the final battle-cry 3665
In love's war-field. Though, to the man of faith,

Decease, howe'er it came, is sugar-sweet,
The death that was attained by Haydar's son
Is yet a thing apart. The war of kings
3670 Is depredation; of the men of faith
Is sanctified as prophet's deed. To them
War is a loveward flight; it is a means
To leave the world, to go to love's domain.
He, who to nations of the world, conveyed
3675 The message of divine desire, described
War as the asceticism of faith.[1]
None save the martyr knows this point; for he
Alone doth pay its price with his own blood.

Living Stream departs from Paradise and the Houries Remonstrate

Now shattered was my glass of poise and peace,
3680 When Rumi whispered in my ear, "Arise."
Those words of love, that faith, that certitude,
That lofty hall, that palace bright; alas!
My heart was sore, when I did reach its gate
And saw a houries' concourse swarming there.
3685 "O Living Stream. O Living Stream," they cried,
"O thou possessed of fire and melody,"

1 Refers to a saying of the holy Prophet "*Jehad* (lit striving, includes the idea of fighting in a noble cause) is the asceticism of Islam"

Their clamour rose, "Sit with us for a while."

Living Stream

The questing man doth always dread the goal
More than he ever fears the highwayman.
In union nor in separation can 3690
Love find repose; it rests not till it gains
The sight of Beauty that will ne'er decline.
Before the idols it doth bow at first,
It spurns them in the end. Uncaring love,
A wayfarer in space and what's beyond 3695
Moves ceaselessly. Like rapid waves we are,
Advancing endlessly without a pause.

The Houries of Paradise

Thy habits are like those of time itself,
Withhold not now from us a happy song.

The Song of Living Stream

What search for God will profit thee 3700
When thou failed reaching man?
What is friend's union for the one
From self away who ran?

Be fastened to thy bough again
To draw life-kindling sap, 3705

Or even breeze will bring to thee
O withering rose, mishap.

The precious musk which men desire
Is blood-drops of a heart;
3710 O wandering gazelle of Haram,
What's there in China's mart?

From sovereignty that it bestows
Doth *faqr* its worth derive;
Whereas thy mat doth thy own self
From Jamshyd's throne deprive.
3715

Demand no flaming song from me
With which thy heart to burn;
For men to find its bleeding track
To tulip-garden turn.

3720 The company of enlightened hearts
Can give thy eyes new sight,
While thou but search collyrium
To add to thine eyes light.

A dervish I am who upon
3725 The world doth shed new light,
Thou needest no other alchemy
Pray gain from me my sight.

In the Presence

Though paradise is shot through with His gleams
The soul remains unquenched save with His view.
From our own fountainhead we are removed 3730
Like flitting birds that cannot find their nests.
If knowledge be perverse and evil-formed,
It drops a curtain thick before our eyes;
And if it seeks the sight, it forms the path
And guides its steps as well; it breaks the shell 3735
Of this existence that thou mayest inquire
How life doth grow; and thus it levels tracks,
Thus kindles zest; it gives a blazing heart
A restless soul, and eyes that weep at night.
Since knowledge doth elucidate the world 3740
Of tint and smell, both sight and soul derive
Their sap from it. It brings thee to the stage
Of ecstasy and then like Gabriel
It makes thee pass. How doth love lead one to
The final privacy, when of its eyes 3745
It jealous is itself? At first it takes
Both charted paths and friends, but in the end
It treads its way alone, companionless.

I left behind those palaces and nymphs,

3750 And in the sea of light I cast the skiff
Of soul. I was soon drowned in Beauty's sight,
Which, though in constant flux, yet never fades.
And in the conscience of the universe
I was all sunk, till life became a harp
3755 Whose every string poured forth a symphony
More drawn and drenched in blood than all the rest.
We are a single tribe of fire and light:
The sun, the moon, the nymphs and Gabriel
And man. Before the soul a mirror hangs;
3760 A wide-eyed wonder and a confidence
Get mixed thereby. This very morn doth see
The yesterday and the tomorrow wait
Together on His presence. Truth reveals
Itself despite its secrets manifold,
3765 And with my eyes it doth behold itself.
His sight is all increase, His sight means not
A diminution of the slightest kind;
His sight doth lift one from the body's tomb.
Against each other stand the serf and Sire,
3770 But both are restless, thirsting for the sight.
Where'er be life, it means a ceaseless search,
I know not if I am a prey or He.

Love gave my soul the bliss of sight: it made
Me boldly sally forth: "O thou from whom
The two worlds gain their vision and their light, 3775
For but a while look at that home of clay.
It little suits the free: its hyacinths
Like nettles sting. All steeped in revelry
Its masters are, while all the work of slaves
Is but to count the tedious days and nights. 3780
Imperialism has turned Thy world to waste,
And in its sleeve the sun holds dreary nights;
The wisdom of the westerners consists
Of but despoilation; temples have
To Khaybars turned devoid of Haydar's hand. 3785
Helpless is he who says, 'No god save God,'
His thought is centreless and goes astray;
He dieth slowly of four deaths: the king,
The *pir*, the *mullah* and the usurer.
Is such a world e'er worthy of Thyself, 3790
This clay and water do but stain Thy cloak."

The Voice of Beauty

Of good and evil as they suited Us
We drew the patterns with the pen of truth.
Dost know, O man of noble clay, what means

3795 To live? It is to get thy rightful share
Of the Lord's grace. What means it to create?
To search for love and to unveil oneself;
All tumults, past and present, could not rise
Without Our grace. Life is mortality
3800 And everlastingness as well; it is
Compact of both creativeness and zeal.
Dost live? then learn to love and to create
And hold the heavens in grasp like Us.
And shatter all that suits thee not, and make
3805 A fresher world grow from thy mind. The man
Who is liberated finds it burdensome
To live in other's world. The one who lacks
Creative power is an infidel,
A heathen vile; he doth not from Our grace
3810 Obtain his share, nor from the tree of life
He plucks his fruit. Art thou the man of God?
Then let thy brilliance be that of a sword,
And thyself be thy own world's destiny.

Living Stream

What law governs the world of hue and scent,
3815 Save that the water that has flowed downstream
Will ne'er return? For life abominates

All repetition and, beneath the sky,
It hates to retrogress. It doth not let
A nation that has fallen rise again.
Once dead, a people seldom wake; what cure 3820
Have they save resignation or the grave?

The Voice of Beauty

The stuff of life is not recurrency
Of breath; its ground, its essence and its roots
Are firmly laid in Our eternity.
To draw the soul close to the One who said, 3825
"I'm nigh" is to partake in life divine.
By unity, a man is raised above,
And doth perennially transcend the earth;
By unity, a nation is endued
With towering might. 'Tis unity alone 3830
That shapes a Buzar and a Bayazid,
A Shibli too, and that confers the gift
On nations, of a Tughral's crown and sway.
No permanence is there for man without
The radiance that issues forth from Us, 3835
A person and a nation gain their life
From it alone. Both reach their excellence
Through unity: the one in inner grace.

In might, the other. For the man becomes
3840 Like Salman and the nation doth achieve
The sovereignty of Solomon. The first
Doth look at but the One, the other welds
The many into one. While in the world,
Choose thou the former's company, and let
3845 Thy life be rooted in the latter's soil.

O thou who sayest "No god save God," what is
A nation, dost thou know? It is to have
A thousand eyes and yet a single sight.
The men of God are always one in proof
3850 And argument: "In different tents we dwell,
Our hearts in concord beat." This unity
Of vision makes the particles of sand
Bright as the sun; shouldst thou attain it, thou
Wilt see the Lord unveiled. Think not it small,
3855 It manifests the unity of God.
And when a nation soaks itself in it,
A paramountcy doth it gain with ease.

The body's dwelling is not needed by
A nation's soul; association forms
3860 Its life; and when association sags

It withers 'way. If ye are dead, then rise
And rally with a singleness of sight,
And find a centre and a lasting life;
And forge a unity of thought and deed
So that ye may attain authority. 3865

Living Stream

Where is the world? and what am I? and what
Art Thou? Why doth a distance stretch between?
Why am I shackled in the chains of fate?
Why dost Thou live and I decay and die?

The Voice of Beauty

Thou wert confined within a walled world, 3870
Whoever lives in it must die in it.
If thou seek'st life, bring forth thy ego's wealth,
Encompass all dimensions in thy self.
'Tis then that thou wilt see both who thou art
And who I am 'Tis then that thou wilt find 3875
Why thou must die and how thou mayest live.

Living Stream

Unknowing that I am. I crave from Thee
Indulgence for my wish: couldst thou not tear
The covers off the face of destiny!

3880 The march of revolutions I have seen
In Russia and in Germany; I have
Experienced the tumult that doth rage
Within the Muslim's soul; I have observed
The Strivings of both East and West. Reveal,
3885 Unlock their destinies before my eyes.

The Radiance of Glory

All of a sudden I beheld my world,
My earth and sky, immersed in scarlet light:
And glowing like a furnace. Then my soul
Was smitten with effulgence and I fell
3890 Like Moses, drenched in ecstasy. The light
Ripped off all veils, but snatched my speech away.
And from the bosom of this universe
That knew no how nor why, there issued forth
A melody suffused with inner fire.

3895 "Be not enchanted by the West
Nor on the East thou needest dote,
For both this ancient and this new
Together are not worth an oat.

"So carelessly to Ahriman
3900 The precious jewel thou didst sell,

Was such that cannot well be pledged
With even trusty Gabriel.

"Full jealously life guards itself
Although it doth in company dwell:
And ever in a caravan 3905
Alone live thou, with all tread well.

"Than radiant sun that illumines
The ancient sky thou art more bright.
So live that every grain of sand
May borrow brilliance from thy light. 3910

"Both Darius and Kaiqubad
Like Alexander and Khusro
Are blades of grass swept by the wind
Off from its path: 'tis ever so.

"The tavern itself feels ashamed 3915
How shallow is your glass of wine;
A tumbler take and prudently
Drink deep, and be mature and fine."